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Postcolonial Spaces and Cultural (Dis & Re) Location : Production of
Space in H.Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*(1991) and M.Ali's *Brick
lane* (2004)

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Abstract

The vast territories that the British Empire once colonized resulted in a fiction that reflects specific groups within the British metropolis known as Black British literature. Black British literature can be defined as the literature written in English by Caribbean, Asian, African and other people who originate from the former British empire. This project represents a closer examination of particular problematic issues that are dealt with in Black British Literature namely: cultural (dis & re)location and space production. It investigates the dilemmas of representation of South Asian ethnographic minorities living in the metropolitan city of London. The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of changing places and mobility on the process of “space production”, taking into consideration shifts from periphery to centre. Furthermore, this study sheds light on the processes of cultural dislocation and later relocation along with their effects in the production of space. Hanif Kureishi’s *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1991) and Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane* (2004) portray hybrid characters that are seeking a sense of belonging. The struggle of these characters to find their own spaces in the post-imperial London is studied according to Henry Lefebvre Theories of “Production of space” as well as Soja & Bhabha’s “Thirdspace” To illustrate the possibility of the existence of a produced third space where all these characters can express and celebrate their hybrid identities.

Dedications

To my parents: SELT Ahmed & BENLAHRECH Fattoum

To my tender sister : SELT Amel

Thank you so much for being who you are.

The road would be a lot longer and toilsome without the encouragement of my family especially: mum and dad and my lovely sisters Amoula and Nafissa. Many thanks go to Lazhari, Omar, Salim for everything they have done to assist me throughout my whole life.

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General Introduction

General introduction

In the last decades, British fiction has been renewed and remarkably enriched by what is frequently known as immigration of content. The vast territories that the British Empire colonized once, resulted in a fiction that reflects specific groups' visibility within the British metropolis called Black British literature. Black British literature can be defined as the one written in English by Caribbean, Asian, African and other people who originate from the ex-British empire. The flow of immigrants coming from the former colonies of the British Empire led to the emergence of a new type that altered the composition of the British society; this new race is called black Britain. This latter represents a term that is mostly used to describe all people of colour who tend to associate with the British Empire. Henceforth, British society's shift and gradual transformation from mono-cultural personae to multi-cultural personae is what stimulates such a change in the contemporary British novel.

Terms such as Black British literature and postcolonial literature have been subjects to a huge debate. They are considered problematic due to the question of categorization which is fueled by political reasons. These political implications foster the concepts of belonging and exclusion. Issues of hybridity, ambivalence, exile, mimicry and other paradigms set by the postcolonial theory rest on the assumption that interactions between British culture and indigenous postcolonial cultures are usually negotiated outside the metropolis.

Nevertheless, due to the "space" of its "contact zone", black Britain tend to be distinct and prominent from other postcolonial cultures because it tackles issues related to postcolonial and to British cultures in Britain. Consisting, consequently, a fertile ground for a new kind of space at "the center". The political debates that surround issues of ethnicity, race and cultural differences have caused a crisis, holding the idea of nation as a community.

This concept involves defining culture by its boundaries: culture can be defined and distinguished by the amount of differences that other cultures show. This sense of multicultural collection of societies involves the “centre-periphery” model of cultural relations. These cultural differences have involved a kind of spatial conflict. For Lefebvre, the emphasis is not on space as a priori or ontological entity, but on the processes and strategies of producing space, which are by definition historical. This leads to the creation of the “the abstract space” which is considered as a strategy in postmodern geographies and completed under pressure from his critics, in third space. According to Lefebvre, to extricate the aspects of this contradictory realm of lived space, it requires reassembling and transforming fragments of urban life not reifying existing separations of modernity as forms of absolute simultaneity or separate spatialities.

Although space is being reduced especially by architects, constructors, and planners to a physical object, it has a vigorous mental as well as social impact like it is elucidated in Henry Lefebvre’s book *The Production of Space*. Lefebvrian theory of the production of space has undergone a remarkable renaissance during recent years. The concept of producing space was still unusual at the time when Lefebvre developed his theory. This theory asserts that space is fundamentally bound up with social reality. For him, space does not exist “in itself”: it is “produced”. For Lefebvre space and time are not purely material factors, they cannot be diminished to the status of pure. They are understood as being integral aspects of social practice. Key to Lefebvre theory is the view that the production of space can be divided into three dialectally interconnected “dimensions”: “spatial practice”, “representations of space” and “spaces of representation”. They refer to perceived, conceived and lived space. Perceived space refers to reality objective, the concrete space that people encounter in their daily lives. Conceived space refers to how space is reconstructed in the mind – mental

reconstruction- . As for the lived space, it consists an accumulation of the two spaces “perceived and conceived that represents the complexity of a person’s actual experience.

In recent times, a huge attention has been directed to ethnographic and literary studies that have analyzed how diasporic South Asian peoples tend to cope and adapt to contemporary western societies and how they translate their experiences and sentiments into literary forms. They tend to provide vivid pictures of life in the English metropolis. London constitutes the muse for different cultures. The capital city of the British Empire in the past ; London served as a metonym for imperial power itself and was considered the imperial center in relation to colonies which were supposedly at the periphery. Right after the British Empire was gradually dissolving, due to various reasons along with decolonization, its capital became the preferable city of immigrant destination; remarkably, from its previous colonies.

Furthermore, the importance of this project lays in the fact that space and spatiality have become a central attention of scholars recently. This, perhaps, is due to the growing interest in spaces and places and their effects on the lives of individuals. Correspondingly, many studies concerned with South Asian diaspora did not fill the gap that exists between their status as being culturally dislocated and the process through which they could ultimately produce spaces to belong within the metropolis. In addition, what motivated this research is the fact that Lefebvrian theories of production of space are nascent notions to be applied in literature. Also, being aware of the influencive relationship between space and place, the novels of *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1991) and *Brick Lane* (2004) seemed to be suitable to the research since both of them hold the names of places with their accompanying cultures.

Both, Hanif Kureish’s the *Buddha of Suburbia* (1991) and Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane* (2004) represent characters that are culturally disturbed. Indeed, themes of cultural dislocation and alienation forefront the thematic construction of these two novels. Even though, this

project does not consist a chronological study of fact and fiction concerning these novels; added to that, the fact that it excludes gender studies as a focal point, this could not hinder the process of analyzing the events and relating them to space and culture. Besides, this project tackles issues of South Asian immigrants who belong to first and second generations and analyzes their experiences of displacement and mobility through the characters portrayed in the novels dealt with. Moreover, the fact that both writers could skillfully provide vivid pictures of the conflicts existing between native and foreign cultures and by taking into account the fact that both protagonists: Karim of *The Buddha of Suburbia* and Nanzeen of *Brick lane* make shifts from periphery to center; Karim moves from London's suburbs to the capital itself and Nanzeen moves from a small village in Bangladesh to the metropolitan city of London. And also, by considering that both of them are subjects to stereotypes by the host culture due to the fact of being ethnic minorities and occupy marginal spaces; Nanzeen being a Muslim "girl" from an ethnic background and Karim as a mixed race kid who is sexually troubled. The question that manifests itself is: how does cultural (dis&re)location affect space production? This question trigger other sub-questions: How do characters define their own space in a stereotypical landscape, with regard to the fact of being originated from ex-colonies? How do Hanif Kureishi and Monica Ali reflect themes of cultural (dis & re)location in their works: *Brick lane* and *The Buddha of Suburbia*? And how does cultural (dis or re) location affect the production of their own spaces in the metropolitan centre?

We might set as hypotheses the fact that both, Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1991) and Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* (2004) combine themes of cultural dislocation and relocation along with issues of identity formation as well as a political critique of particular aspects of contemporary British society that have been widely prominent since the seventies. Analysis of Kureish's novel focuses on the representation of urban and suburban spaces with respect to ethnographic and sexual identity. He directs a remarkable attention to

the cultural significance of space and proves that spaces have a huge influence on the people dwelling certain places. His main character, Karim, personifies the conception of “hybridity”. In this sense, he fills, with regard to the mainstream English culture, a liminal space. He is both an insider and outsider and his experiences are to a large extent determined by his inbetweenness’ cultural space.

Another hypothesis that seems to be relevant to the questions raised above is the fact that Ali’s efforts to represent the experiences of a group of Bangladeshi immigrants who have never been represented in British fiction before is indeed a step forward that induces South Asian diaspora to surpass the hindrance of their colonial backgrounds . Drawing upon Gayatri Spivak’s views, she affirms that the lack of representation of marginalized groups serves to maintain their neglect and impotency within the political agenda. Amid this subaltern position, Spivak highlights various categories of marginalization namely: class and gender. She emphasizes on the fact that women take the lion’s share of this subjugation as they are subdued twice. She suggests that in the context of colonial production, the subaltern is claimed to have no history of his own and “cannot speak”. In her views, the subaltern as a female is even more deeply in the shadow.

Monica Ali in her novel *Brick Lane* is seeking a textual space in which the subaltern speaks. She portrays her protagonist as an alienated and defamiliarized person who lacks a “space” in her environment. Thus, *Brick Lane* is to some extent a representation of individual narrative of empowerment against contemporary as well as historical contexts that acquaint the formation of ethnicities and cultural identities and how they are negotiated within a multicultural context.

In an attempt to give adequate answers to the previous problematic questions and verify the relevance of the hypotheses mentioned above, a Geocritical along with an analytical

method will be followed in order to highlight the impact of displacement on cultural dislocation and the influence of this latter on the process of space production.

Likewise, the present work will be divided into three chapters. The first chapter will be dedicated to the theoretical background for this dissertation. It will provide an inductive study that aims at bringing together the theories used and the historical context of the novels dealt with. In addition, it will attempt, through the use of postcolonial theory, to conceptualize the various issues of space with the focus on South Asian Diaspora that went through a process of displacement, achieving shifts from marginal spaces; bringing with them their histories, identities and concerns which were later translated into literary works, largely termed as Black British Literature. Moreover, the study conducted in this chapter will provide an overview concerning the concepts of commonwealth and postcolonial works of literature and how the shift from one concept to another was gradually achieved. Thereafter, it will shed light on Lefebvrian spatial theory that discusses how spaces are variously produced relying on Edward Soja's reading of Lefebvre's theory of Production of Space. The chapter will also deal with Bhabha's ideas about third space and hybridity which will take a large plenum of this study.

As for the second chapter, its aim is to investigate how the characters depicted in Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* and Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* tend to (dis)locate themselves from their original cultures. It also represents a thorough examination of their ability to culturally (re)locate themselves and develop a hybrid persona. Likely, cultural engagement may be both antagonistic and affinitive, depending on the social articulation of difference that demands an on-going process of negotiation. This latter aims at creating an authorized platform for cultural hybridity that is the outcome of either: a historical transition or a movement of dislocation.

Nevertheless, the third chapter will adopt an analytical study that aims at investigating the way characters produce different spaces, in an attempt to cope with their changing places. Towards this end, many spaces have been examined in order to hint at the variety of possibilities that these characters have in the process of producing them. Moreover, this chapter will highlight the effects of cultural backgrounds of individuals on the way they engage in their daily lives. This aspect of space is going to be studied in the light of Lefebvre's notion of "everydayness" or "quotidienneté" that deals with the drawbacks of modernity and its negative impacts on the lives of individuals as well as the effects of capitalism on rendering the modern life meaningless and recognized by alienation and ineptness.

In order to conduct this present research a number of books have been consulted and used as references. To illustrate the shift from commonwealth to postcolonial literature, *The Empire Writes Back* (2003), is a collaboration of the significant scholars: Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. It is where the term postcolonial was first introduced and approved. This book is considered an account of a wide array of literature written in English dealing with the experience of colonization and its legacies as well as the challenges of the post-colonial world to get rid of the constraints imposed by the former colonizers. This book investigates the power of language in a postcolonial context and how the literature produced within this context can act as a radical critique of Eurocentric and hegemonic point of views concerning the formerly colonized countries. Regarding the issues surrounding the Black British literature, Stein Black in his book *Black British Literature Novels of Transformation* (2004) examines the novels that are written by Black British writers. He draws upon the role that these Black British writers play in portraying the cultural makeover of the British society which is the result of the large scales of immigration from former British colonies. He suggests that Black British literature is not a mere result of the British society's shift from

mono-cultural personae to multicultural personae, but rather it consists a catalyst for this change. In the same token, Nick Bentley, the Author of *Contemporary British Fiction* (2008) provides a critical guide to Black British literature. He engages through a number of concepts that go hand in hand with the content of Black British Literature particularly: postmodernism, feminism, gender, and postcolonial studies, directing a notable interest on the importance of gender politics and sexuality in the making of the contemporary British society as a cultural mosaic in which various ethnic groups exist. He also highlights the effects that these multicultural ethnic groups have on the creation of new cultural narratives and spaces.

In tackling the issue of space, theories of Henry Lefebvre and Edward Soja are of a great importance here. In his book *The Production Of space* (1992), Henry Lefebvre tackles issues related to dialectical materialism, architecture, urban lifestyle and the experience of everyday life. His book consists a search for a settlement between mental and real spaces. He shifts from the metaphysical ideological considerations of space to its experience of everyday life of home and city. He asserts that space is a production process that takes place in terms of three interconnected dimensions. He defines these three dimensions in two ways: he uses the concepts of “spatial practice”, “representation of space” and “space representations”. He further suggests that a social space includes not only a concrete materiality but a thought, a concept, a feeling and an experience out of which the space emerges. The essence of Lefebvre theory of production of space lays in his identification of three moments of production: material production, production of knowledge, and the production of meaning. Lefebvre’s theory is significant is the present research because it translates the experience of hybrid cultures, those emerging from two histories or those trapped in a status of in-betweenness, trying to locate themselves in a “space” that is produced according to their conception and perception of the host culture and their original one.

Furthermore, Edward Soja in his book *Thirdspace: Journey to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (1996) is conducting a contemporary critical study on the notion of space. According to him, Thirdspace is a set of intellectual journeys, arguing on the spatial biography of Henry Lefebvre and his conceptualization of social space as perceived, conceived and lived. He draws on the theory of production of space of Lefebvre in order to bring up issues surrounding “margins” as a space of radical classifications in post modern spatial interpretations and postcolonial critique in terms of race, gender and class as well as the new cultural politics of difference and tolerance in terms of identity.

In fact, as it is illustrated above, there is a rapidly growing literature on the issues concerned with space, culture and Postcolonialism. However, less works have been written to set forth the relationship between the three conceptions. In the same respect, many subjects remained untackled; specifically, negotiating the concepts previously mentioned in relation to the South Asian Diaspora who live in the metropolitan city of London. Therefore, this project comes as a tentative contribution that aims at bringing together these concepts through seeking a theoretical background within which the experiences of South Asian immigrants can be thoroughly analyzed.

Theoretical debate:

Domestic space: refers to the space of the home. It is defined as being the only safe and clean space that is being occupied mainly by women “housewives”. This space derives its meaning from its opposition to the public space and is often linked to domestic activities related to its material structures such as: decorating and renovating or other kind of activities like cooking, cleaning or gardening.

Gendered space: the study of gender and space is an interdisciplinary one. The production of gendered space is usually linked to power and power relations that are inscribed in space

production. Gendered space is the one that is being produced on a gender basis or that is “forced” to be produced in respect to gender that is usually determined by social as well as cultural implications.

Geocritical approach: represents the intersection of literature and cartography. It suggests that through literature, readers can discover spaces that are created fictitiously for the characters of any given book. Westphal, being the one who foregrounded the term, challenges the rife idea of the rectitude of space representation, claiming that it has been established from a Eurocentric point of view. The geocritical method postulated by Bertrand Westphal permits readers to figure out how different texts represent spaces related to the selected locations. Geocriticism suggests an understanding of how literary representation and spatiality interconnect.

Hybridity: the term originally refers to a sense of mixture: it was first used in biology before it has become common among different academic disciplines such as linguistics and racial theory. In the context of this research, the term has been used as a part of the postcolonial discourse. For Bhabha, hybridity is the process by which the colonized governing authority translates the identity of the colonized within a singular framework. It refers also to the cultural metissage that is established between cultures different in essence that results in the emergence of a new one that contains the properties of both.

Multicultural Space: it exists as a result of intercultural, multidirectional and reciprocal movements. It can be defined as the space where diverse cultures co-exist and embrace racial, religious, as well as cultural differences. In fact, the multicultural is important for the present research because it denotes the city of London which has witnessed a change in the composition of its society to be widely regarded as a multicultural site where different populations from different cultural backgrounds peacefully co-exist.

Chapter one:

Culture and production of
postcolonial spaces in Black British
Literature

Chapter One: Culture and Production of Postcolonial spaces in Black British Literature.

1-Introduction:

In the mid of the twentieth century, the emerging sciences of space witnessed a renaissance that recognized the importance of place and location in the contemporary English literature. Likely, in postcolonial studies, space consists an integral part of the postcolonial discourse since it shapes the central concern of how one defines his/her own identity and how his/her identity is defined by others. As a part of a vaster theoretical restructuring of the academic sphere, especially in the wake of the modern social change, the need to produce a respectable amount of knowledge that would be relevant to the realities of the current world is of a great importance. This chapter attempts to highlight this need through the use of postcolonial theory to conceptualize the issues of space with the focus on South Asian diasporic communities who went through a process of displacement, moving from their peripheral homelands to the metropolitan city of London, bringing with them their histories, identities and concerns which were later translated into literary works largely termed as Black British Literature.

This Chapter also will provide an overview about the concepts of commonwealth and postcolonial literature and how the shift from one concept to another was gradually achieved. Moreover, it will shed light on Lefebvrian spatial theory that discusses how spaces are variously produced relying on Edward Soja's reading of Lefebvre's theory of Production of Space. Besides, to emphasize the usefulness of the postcolonial theory in this research, we tried to conceptualize Bhabha's ideas about third space, along with hybridity in order to highlight the effects of these two concepts on the process of cultural dislocation and relocation which will occupy a large plenum of this chapter.

I.1. Commonwealth, Postcolonialism and the emergence of Black British literature

To clarify the shift from commonwealth to postcolonial and from postcolonial to Black British literature, there should be an analysis to the historical evolution of this literature. First and foremost, commonwealth literature can be defined as the literature produced by the countries which were once British colonies, or the countries that though were not British colonies, they were members of the Commonwealth of Nations.¹

The shift from colonial to commonwealth suggested that the former colonies moved from the status of subservience to “equality” with their former masters. However, the term of commonwealth was disapproved by some scholars such as Griffith, Rushdie and Ashcroft; because it tries to gather a number of different indigenous cultures under one name. It has also been rejected due to the colonial inclinations and the imperious connotations it holds. In this respect, Meenatshi Mukherjee argues that:

”The term Commonwealth literature has finally fallen into academic disfavor, one can see that its biggest problem indeed was the presupposition that an umbilical cord tied all there diverse bodies of writings from Australia, Canada, India, Nigeria, Kenya, Trinidad, Jamaica, Barbados and the rest to the mother country England, which absent centre set the evaluative norms. Absent –

¹ The Commonwealth of Nations, or the Commonwealth (formerly the British Commonwealth), is an intergovernmental organization of 53 member states that were mostly territories of the former British Empire. The Commonwealth operates by intergovernmental consensus of the member states, organized through the Commonwealth Secretariat and Non-governmental organizations, organized through the Commonwealth Foundation. The Commonwealth dates back to the mid-20th century with the decolonization of the British Empire through increased self-governance of its territories. It was formally constituted by the London Declaration in 1949, which established the member states as "free and equal". The symbol of this free association is Queen Elizabeth II who is the Head of the Commonwealth. The Queen is also the monarch of 16 members of the Commonwealth, known as Commonwealth realms. The other members of the Commonwealth have different persons as head of state: 32 members are republics and five members are monarchies with a different monarch. Member states have no legal obligation to one another. Instead, they are united by language, history, culture and their shared values of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. These values are enshrined in the Commonwealth Charter and promoted by the quadrennial Commonwealth Games. See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commonwealth_of_Nations

because literature from Britain was never seen as a part of this package”²

Hence, relying on the quote mentioned above, the use of the term “Commonwealth” is often coincided with Eurocentric point of view that places a huge emphasis on their colonial past. And like what is highlighted in Mukherjee’s quote, it tends to gather all the written material from different areas of the world under one denotation, which hints at the continuity of Britain’s control over the nations that she once ruled. Salman Rushdie in his essay entitled: *Commonwealth literature Does Not Exist* affirms that: “a body of writing created , I think , in the English language by persons who are not themselves white Britons or Irish citizens of the united states of America.”³ For Salman Rushdie, the whole idea of commonwealth literature is a mere attempt to create an exclusive literary ghetto. He also adds that:

“ effect of creating such a ghetto was, is, to change the meaning of the broader term English literature which I’d always taken to mean simply the literature of the English language into something far narrower , something topographical, nationalistic, possibly even racially segregationist”⁴.

Rushdie, here, aims at highlighting the racial implementations of the term, justifying his refusal to such term as being built upon racist basis that serves the colonial hegemonic perspective. This latter has been widely challenged by most of the postcolonial thinkers -such as Rushdie, Spivak and others- in order to achieve a full independence from the previous

² Mukherjee, Meenakshi. «Interrogating Post-colonialism.» *Interrogating Post-colonialism: theory, text and context* (1996).

³ Rushdie, Salman. «Commonwealth Literature Does not Exist.» *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism* (1991): 63.

⁴ Rushdie, Salman. «Commonwealth Literature Does not Exist.» *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism* (1991):70.

colonizer who aims at destroying the colonial subjects' identity in favor of the supremacy of his own.

Thus the shift was gradual as the term "postcolonial" started to foreground the political spheres and dimensions of the text as well as the context of the literature, formerly known as "Commonwealth Literature". Despite the fact that the term postcolonial has various definitions that pertain to various contexts, perhaps the one that could be relevant in this context is the one provided by Stephen Selmon who occupied himself with defining the term in relation to the literature produced by the formerly colonized subjects. Selmon's defines postcolonial literature in his essay *Unsettling the Empire*:

"an outgrowth of what formerly were commonwealth studies... a study which came into being after English studies had been liberised to include American and then an immediate national or regional literature: Australian, Canadian, West Indian"⁵.

Henceforth, according to him, postcolonial literature is the one that responds to the intellectual discourse of European colonization in Asia, Africa, and the Pacific. Post-colonialism as a genre of contemporary history questions and reinvents modes of cultural perception, the ways of viewing and of being viewed. As anthropology, Post-colonialism records humans' relations among the colonial nations and the subaltern peoples exploited by colonial rule. This debate will continue to look for reasons that consist a fertile ground for the shift of this latter to Black British Literature.

Britain's transformation into a "multicultural" society⁶ required a new way of representation. The writers of different cultural backgrounds, and who were living outside the

⁵ Selmon, Stephen. «Unsettling the Empire: Resistance Theory for the Second World.» *World Literature Written in English* (1990): 30-4

⁶ The history of Britain's transformation into a multicultural society can be viewed from various perspectives. However, for the contemporary Britain, debates about multiculturalism take a specific turn. At the beginning of

metropolis achieved a move to the center, bringing with them issues of their countries that once suffered from the horrors of colonialism. Themes such as homelessness, hybridity, inbetweenness and exile are what characterize this literature. It encompasses a number of black writers who tend to contest a new space of representation, to give a voice to the voiceless, the invisible minorities that consist a significant part of the contemporary British society.

I.2. Henry Lefebvre theory of Production of Space

Lefebvre is a well known Marxist philosopher who devoted a notable deal of his philosophical writings to highlighting the significance of space and space production in relation to society. Lefebvre's main argument in *The Production of Space* is centered on understanding it as a social product. Furthermore, he conceptualizes it as a complex social construction based on values, and the social production of meanings which affect spatial practices and perceptions.

I.2.1 Overviewing the theory with reference to Black British Literature

the 21st century, multiculturalism became more as an English phenomenon than it is British one. Issues that contain race relations and religion are now perceived within a cultural context. Increasingly, this was further seen in correlation with terror (attacks on America (9/11 and Britain 7/7) developed a sense of phobia towards the ethnographic minorities that inhabited England as result of immigration, causing certain problems that hindered a full assimilation to the British Culture. Nevertheless, since multiculturalism signals a plurality of cultures and consequently identities, Major British writers and thinkers among whom Hanif Kureishi took in charge defying the false stereotypes that pertains to minorities. In the mid 1980's, Kureishi wrote in *The rainbow Sign* (1986) that white Britons need to learn a new way of being British, and that the fact of being British is continually changing and did not remain stable. Immigrants of the 2nd and the 3rd generations that are said to be the product of the first comers are now, a vital part of the British society who came to Britain from her previous colonies, holding a British passport. Henceforth, according to him, Britishness as a national identity needs to be ceaselessly reassessed and adopted to changing circumstances.

Henry Lefebvre (1901-1991) was a French social theorist and philosopher largely known by his famous book “*The Production of Space*”. It was originally written in French bearing the same title “*La production de l’espace*”. He has been specialized in the world of urban studies and many geographers and academic intellectuals have adopted his ideas. In his native country, Lefebvre was best known as a Marxist philosopher and rural-urban sociologist who brought a reachable Marx to a whole generation of French scholars.

Henry Lefebvre was born in 1901 in Hagetmau in the Pyrenees to “passionately, even fanatically catholic” mother and to a father who was “urbanely anti-clerical” which was seen by critics as a sort of contradiction he was to relish for the rest of his life and this is reflected in the contradictions he explores in *The Production of Space*. His book was perceived as a culminating work in a series of seven books between 1968 and 1974. Lefebvre’s notable work on space was one of the prominent inspirations for a “spatial turn” in the field of humanities in the 1970’s that recognizes space and society as being equally constituted. His groundbreaking conceptualization tends to investigate not the production in space, but rather the production of space. This identification of space as being produced signifies that social relations have dual implications: producing space and being shaped by it.

Indeed, through his theory of production of space, Lefebvre tends to provide an intriguing argument concerning the definition of space. He sought to theorize space as the common aspect and the inevitable outcome of man’s various social activities and practices through investigating what remained shared to spaces by a specific historical differentiation that affects their production. In fact space is one of the most intimately experienced phenomena of the human life and probably, it is the least aspect to be reflected on. In this regard, and with an emphasis on what is mentioned above, Lefebvre regards space as nothing passively given but rather, he views it as being actively produced by human beings. He claims

that space is not fixed or constructed on the basis of sensory data, but it is self identified through history.

Instead, he suggests that it is variously produced as a result of the different actions of human beings. Since modality of these human actions has undergone different changes over time, space consequently, ought to be understood as basically as historical. This latter draws on the fact that space is incomplete and always a subject to the effects of social and political changes that touch the different aspects of human life. Thus, it becomes evident that space for Lefebvre is heterogeneous; he explains that the social and historical space productions can be understood through grasping the three qualitatively interwoven kinds of spatial production, namely “spatial practices”, “representations of space” and “representational spaces”. These three spatial modes can be understood through other cognitive modes, co-related to three kinds of production of space. Perceived, conceived and lived space.⁷ Firstly, perceived space relates to a great extent to spatial practices and consists the spatial counterpart of the actual process of social production. Conceived space, which is the second kind corresponds to “representations of space” or as it is mostly conceived, the space in its truest sense refers to the nature of space and the way in which this latter is conceptualized whether in a life-world terms or in the light of a philosophical or even scientific ground. As for the lived space, which correlates with representational space, it speaks about not only space that is passively lived by inhabitants through unspoken symbols and images, but also, as it is appropriated by artists and architects and described by philosophers.

Production of space theory, also, draws a paramount importance on the concept of social space. Henri Lefebvre defines social space in the light of Marxist philosophies of class struggle and the power of the state over the process of producing it. Accordingly, Lefebvre suggests that social activities that people engage in play an important role in defining what a

⁷ Ibid

space really is. The interplay between the concepts of place and place-making confirms Lefebvre's definition of space as: "a part of an interaction between subjects and their surroundings."⁸

Nevertheless, what is more important is Lefebvre's concept of arguing space as an abstraction.⁹ Lefebvre moved his analysis of space from the old synchronic order of discourse on space especially what is concerned with the social space to the manner through which understanding the geographical space, landscape and property has a history of change.

II.2. Black British Literature in Lefebvrian Spatial Perspective

The core of the theory of space identifies three moments of production: first and foremost material production, second; the production of knowledge, and third, is producing the meaning. Thus, it is evident that space, in the views of Lefebvre, is neither significant in itself nor in the order of materials. Space according to him can be grasped in an active sense as a complex maze of relationships that are being produced and reproduced in relation to the active process that takes place through time. Lefebvre also tends to theorize space through delineating it in a way that contains more than material and the physical space and directs distinguished attention to the social space which explores the space between members of society. This latter, according to Lefebvre again, entails how people are positioned, in relation to one another.

However, like any other significant theory, production of space theory had been viewed as bearing some occluded problems that theorist Edward Soja tried to highlight. Key

⁸ Lefebvre, Henry. *The Production of Space*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991.

⁹ Ibid.

problematic was particularly posed by Soja's interpretation which has been largely influential within and sometimes without the bounds of geography. This postmodern appropriation of Lefebvre's theory lies in the fact that it discusses independent spaces through three dimensions or moments of production. Edward Soja postulates the independent existence of three spaces: physical, mental and a social space. He places a great importance to the social space and coins it as "thirdspace". He interprets it as a comprehensive space, a lived space of representation, and understands it as a place from which all spaces can be grasped, understood and transformed at one and the same time.

Similarly, Foucault asserts that: "the current epoch is perhaps above all the epoch of space"¹⁰. It is necessary to draw upon the importance of social space that serves to achieve more understanding of how it is produced. Lefebvre's focus on space as an emergence rather than pre-existing places consists the starting point in his method of analyzing spatial relations. For Lefebvre, the emphasis must be directed towards the social, particularly "social spaces" of lived actions, he insists that space is vital for the social. Lefebvre recognizes the experimental importance of "la durée" but it is the production of space that provides the parameters and relations of space. He further suggests that: "they live time, after all; they are in time; yet all anyone sees is "movements". In nature, time is apprehended within space. Lefebvre here tends to concern himself with the operation through which space is produced. Social space for him is a set of relations between objects and products. As such, various ways of producing space correspond to different social and productive arrangements. This latter suggests that any potential change in culture and in mode of production reveals a change in the production of space and vice versa.

¹⁰ Foucault, Michel. «Of Other Spaces.» *Diacritics* (1986): 22.

Furthermore, the empirically demonstrable *everyday*¹¹ transformation of social space into a physical or geographical one produces a symbolic meaning of spatial representation of social reality. Lefebvre was aware of the complexity of imaginary and symbolic processes of it in the realm of space. His notable urban theory constitutes the increasing spatialization of social relations through philosophy of history and structural analysis. It takes a central position in the social theoretical reflection on space, time and modernity in European social theory. Furthermore, it is important to denote that the problem of space was only “ascribed to nature”, to the given, to immediate circumstances, to mere geography, to a part of prehistory, otherwise space was conceived as living space and the space of expansion of a people, a culture, a language or a state. One analyzes space as a land, a surface or as expanse: only a space as such its boundaries can be important. At the same moment when towards the end of the eighteenth century, there developed gradually remarkable explicit politics of space, the new insights of theoretical and experimental physics deprived philosophy of its ancient right to speak of time.

Production of space theory has witnessed a significant renaissance due to its attractive content. Its importance appears especially in the fact that it methodically gathers and incorporates the categories of city and space in a single, comprehensive social theory allowing the perception and the analysis of spatial processes at different levels. (Social) space being conceived as a mere social product can be understood through breaking away with the prevalent concept of the space as being material reality existing in itself, the observation against which Lefebvre had used the concept of “production of space”. This theory understands space as essentially bound up with social reality. It suggests that space in itself can never serve as an epistemological starting position. Thus, according to Lefebvre space does not exist by itself; it is produced. In his own conception, space and time are not purely

material, they are understood in the context of spacial society. In this respect, space and time are not merely relational but crucially historical. This implies a call for a thorough analysis that would encompass the social constellation, power relations and conflicts relevant in each situation.

In an attempt to apply Lefebvre's theory on the contemporary Black British literature which is the product of different writers from different origins and cultural backgrounds, we should examine the meaning of this concept first. British fiction has been rejuvenated and varied by what is largely acclaimed as immigration of content. The vast territories that the British Empire colonized once resulted in a fiction that reflects specific groups within the British metropolis known as Black British literature.

Black British literature can be identified as the literature written in English by people who originate from the ex-British empire. The flow of immigrants coming from the former colonies of the British Empire led to the emergence of a new type that altered the composition of the British society, this new race is called black Britain. Black Britain, a term that is frequently used to describe all people of color who tend to associate with the British Empire. British society's shift and gradual transformation from mono-cultural personae to multi-cultural personae is what stimulates such a change in the contemporary British novel. Mark Stein asserts that: "historically speaking, Britain has long been subject to such process of cultural transformation, introduced not only by immigration but also by being annexed as well as by having annexed foreign territory"¹². So, the refusal of these historical ties that links Britain to her previous colonies resulted in the belief of these latter that they have some solid relations with their previous master, choosing it consequently as their ultimate destination for various reasons.

¹² Stein, M. (2004). *Black British literature: novels of transformation*. Ohio state university press.xii (introduction).

The move that they achieved from their peripheral countries to the “metropolitan”¹³ city of London led to certain complications in locating themselves when speaking of space, whether identitarian, cultural or even a space of belonging. The space of these Diasporants may be defined as “the quintessential late 20th century space, a space in which the terms of modern imagination, exile, loss, nation, subject and citizen are negotiated and reinvented for various reasons.”¹⁴ It is within the context of the changing social relations, political crisis, ongoing histories of displacement and cross-border flows of people and ideas that are taken into consideration in investigating the complexities of home and belonging.

Those concepts constitute a major key point in space production process. While home, as a set of material, communal, and emotional securities, was often presented as a space of pastoral stability in the discourse of Diaspora, cultural variation and difference consist a fertile ground for the controversies of space and social space production. According to Bhabha, culture in its essence is mainly transitional and deeply rooted in histories of displacement. In this respect, as articulated in his essay *Dissemination: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of Modern Nation*. He argues that the interstitial space of the margins relegated to diasporic communities, in terms of history and culture is largely an empowered one because it permits the overlap and dislocation of areas of difference from which nation and cultural identity are negotiated. A space, where the present is not conceived as a break away from past or history but rather revealed in its changing as an ever-shifting terrain. Thus Bhabha’s

¹³ The term metropolitan denotes a concept that is utilized binaristically in the colonial discourse. It aims at signifying the relationship between the “center” and the “periphery”. The term draws its origins from the Greek times, when it used to refer to the parent state of a colony. The pioneer use of the term in modern studies was seen in relating it the colonial situation in which the “metropolitan” means “belonging to or constituting the mother country”. Yet, the metropolis in European thought was always seen in the light of “cultural seats” that are readily transferred into imperial as well as colonial relationship. Since the binarism is inherited in this concept that connotes a center and periphery, colonies are considered by definition to be peripheral in relation to the metropolitan centers.

¹⁴ Enwezor, Okwui. *A Question of Place: Revisions, Reassessments, Diaspora*. 1997.p88

main point and arguments lay in the idea that claims the hybrid interaction between different cultures and histories legitimate which makes it possible for both of them to be negotiated and revised, opening as a consequence, more possibilities for cultural tolerance and space production opportunity that Bhabha calls “third space”.

II-4-Conceptualizing hybridity as a postcolonial notion

Thanks to the works of Bhabha and other scholars such as Fanon, the concept of hybridity and mixed cultures came into being. This cultural metissage that is established between two cultures different in essence resulted in the birth of dichotomy of mimicry and mockery. Mimicry can be defined as the process that takes place when the colonized tends to be a blurred copy of the colonized through imitating him from the inside out. The complex relation that comes as a result to the resistance of adopting the colonizer’s values on the one hand, and being assimilated to be like this other on the other hand, gives birth to a situation of ambivalence. Ambivalence according to Athaus-Reid is not about “erasing” the “the contradictions that are many” but rather it is about the acceptance of these difficulties and celebrating them¹⁵. Nevertheless, if mimicry is imitating the colonizer and copying from him all his values and principles, Mockery is the resistance against the colonizer’s views and the

¹⁵ Keller, Catherine. *Postcolonial Theologies: Devinity and Empire*. 2004.p26

rejection of all his views. For Bhabha mimicry and mockery produce: “a consistent ambivalence at the source of traditional discourses on authority that enables a form of subversion, founded on the undecidability that turns the discursive conditions of dominance into the grounds of intervention.”¹⁶

I.3.Dilemmas of representation among South Asian Diaspora

Perhaps the most problematic issue of representation lays how to perceive and conceive the other, especially when it comes to the concept of Blackenization or less whitenization of the other. First and foremost, understanding the word Diaspora is important because it marks a notable shift of focus from an original homeland to the existence of various homelands that employs multiple subjectivities and interrupted histories that push diasporic peoples to redefine their new adopted homelands, as Clifford asserts: “a shared, ongoing history of displacement, suffering, adaptation, or resistance may be as important as the projection of a specific origin.”¹⁷ In this regard, Clifford lifts Diaspora above the regressive aspects of ideology of homeland. The politics of “return to the homeland” and the concept of ethnicity maintained that Englishness was an inheritance in an attempt to emphasize on keeping the English identity and culture negotiated only within England’s national boundaries.

This discourse that is ultimately based on the notion of nationalism¹⁸ is being challenged by the diasporic minorities in Britain. The increasing presence of minority groups that came to Britain of political exile, economic purposes and as refugees brought them from

¹⁶ Bhabha, Homi K. *the location of culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.P112

¹⁷ Clifford, James. *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*. United States: Harvard University Press, 1997.p250

¹⁸ English Nationalism in this context denotes the English sense of cultural unity. It holds a number of political and social movements as well as sentiments inspired by pride in England and English culture. However the effects of English Nationalist attachments on attitudes towards minority groups has been widely debated , especially with the transformation of Britain into a multicultural society.

non-visibility to hyper-visibility. These minority groups became the holders of a dual citizenship which according to some theorists such as Bhabha, have contributed to the creation of “a post-colonial space” within a western metropolitan nation.

The capital city of the British Empire in the past, London served as the metonym for imperial power itself, and was considered the imperial center in relation to the colonies which were supposedly at the periphery. While England’s imperial glory was gradually fading, losing its power and impact with movements of liberation and decolonization process, its capital became the most desired destination of immigrants coming from its previous colonies. The flood of immigrants from the British Empire’s ex-colonies has resulted in a notable transformation of British society from monocultural personae to multicultural personae, creating a multicultural space in which different cultures clash and intermingle. Since the word “post-imperial” Britain suggests the fact of the end of the British Empire, it is also appropriate to describe the metropolitan city as having a post-colonial space as long as the latter affirms the continuous process that denotes the situation of Britain’s former colonies.

John Mcleod’s *Postcolonial London: Rewriting the Metropolis* is an account of how people from formerly colonized countries have interpreted and represented their London “experience”. He suggests that London as a postcolonial space is greatly influenced by the colonial past. He further asserts that Englishness has always been related to the countryside and suburbs, and characterized by politics of exclusion. Nevertheless, Britishness after the war period is becoming more open to the other cultures and growing visible in the city. As urbanity is by far related to these minority cultures, it allows these postcolonial subjects to easily initiate new forms of identity. In this respect, Hanif Kureishi alleges that London is where postcolonial subjects who are confused about their identity belong. This will lead to

another gateway towards Lefebvrian theory of production of space, consisting, a solid basis on which discussion about production of space is held with reference to culture.

I.3.1.Third Space from a postcolonial perspective

Indigenous people have used their efforts of creating a space to strengthen their motivation in order to win their battles of postcolonial justice. They struggle to bring to the fore the problems they face as a result to “the dominant European-oriented norms of statehood, identity and knowledge”¹⁹. In one sense, the concept of third space is becoming more prominent and mostly controversial since it looks into the extent to which indigenous population (subalterns) represent themselves and resist the mainstream in the process of moving towards new politics of recognition. Third space as a concept has powerful spatial metaphor that goes beyond the mere binary of colonizer/colonized, it is rather an intellectual purchase that explains the ways in which ethnographic minorities are represented and how their identities are negotiated.

Bhabha’s account highlights the emergence of third space precisely through ambivalence²⁰ and construction of hybrid identities and postcolonial ties that challenge the binary distinctions of colonizer/colonized west/rest. Cultural diversity or difference consists a notable aspect in conceptualizing the third space. According to Bhabha, there should be a clear distinction between cultural diversity and cultural difference. He suggests that cultural diversity is by far considered as liberal tradition that looks at the diversity of culture as a positive thing, respected and mostly appreciated by the western connoisseur. To this end,

¹⁹A. Teverson, S. Upstone. *Postcolonial Spaces: The Politics of Place in Contemporary Culture*. United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2011.p129

²⁰ Ambivalence as a concept was first developed in psychoanalysis to describe a continual fluctuation between wanting one thing and its opposite at the same time. It also reflects the simultaneous attraction toward and the repulsion from an object, person or action (Young 1995:162). It was adapted into colonial discourse theory by Homi Bhabha. It describes the complex mix of attraction and repulsion that features the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized which is ambivalent. Ambivalence also suggests that complicity and resistance exist in a fluctuating relationship within the colonial subject.

cultural diversity in the views of Bhabha is related to the politics of multiculturalism where a set of different cultures co-exist in a status of ambivalence without being marginalized or challenged by the dominant culture. As Bhabha goes on to say, in an interview dealing with third space, this mode of cultural diversity can only be discussed through the terms of the dominant society's culture which attempts to mask racism. Nevertheless, Bhabha defines the concept of cultural difference in the light of the position it offers to minority cultures. He suggests that this position bears aspects of liminality, alterity and otherness that depart from recognition of the frequent incommensurability of cultural difference. Consequently, one might come to a conclusion that third space does not only represent offering a voice from a hegemonic interlocutor, but rather it announces a contested and improvised orientations that undercover a new process which allows different cultural productions. Third space in other words, "displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives which are inadequately understood through received wisdom."²¹

1.3.2.Hybridizing the third space: a question of overlap

The concept of hybridity occupies a central place within postcolonial discourse. Bhabha developed his concept of hybridity relying on literary and cultural theories that describe the construction of culture and identity within conditions of colonial antagonism and inequity.²² For Bhabha, the role of the indeterminate spaces of in-betweenness and positions that are considered to be the disruption and the displacement of the hegemonic narratives of cultural structures and practices. Thus it becomes evident that Bhabha categorizes hybridity as one form of liminal or in-between space where: "the cutting edge of translocation and

²¹Found in: Huddart, David. *Homi K. Bhabha*. Psychology Press, 2005.p126

²² K.Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture*. Routledge , 1994.p122

negotiation”²³ occurs and which he calls third space. The concept of Third space is of a great importance when trying to analyze the enunciation, subversion as well as transgression of ambivalent categorizes beyond the blurring lines of colonial binary that is prone to “oppositional positions”.

Bhabha argues in an interview that was made with him shortly before the publication of his collection of essays, hybridity does not mean “tracing two original moments from which the third emerges”, but rather, hybridity is “the third space” which enables other positions to emerge”²⁴ Bhabha believes that hybridity “bears the traces of those feelings and practices which inform it, [but] does not give them the authority of being prior in the sense of being original: they are prior only in the sense of being anterior”²⁵. Thus, hybridity may be understood as the third space that enables postcolonial subjects to initiate new signs of identity. As Bhabha claims that identifying the hybrid goes beyond essentialism and binary divisions, it holds new internationalism.

I.3.3.Negotiating Third Space with reference to Bhabha

The process of producing this third space originates from the dispersal of people or their ancestors from their original center to another peripheral space where they maintain a collective memory, vision, or a myth about their homelands. This results in the birth of a feeling of non-acceptance and alienation in the host society. Increasing visibility and presence of minority groups in Britain of political exiles, economic migrants and refugees have contributed in the views of Bhabha to the creation of the third space.

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Rutherford, J. *The Third Space: Interview with Homi Bhabha. Identity, Community, Culture, Difference.* interview. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990.p118

²⁵ K.Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture.* London: Routledge, 1994.p37

Bhabha also, has developed the concept of hybridity. This latter can be defined as the process by which the colonial governing authority undertakes to translate the identity of the colonized (the other) within a singular universal framework but then fails producing familiar but new²⁶. Bhabha suggests that a new hybrid identity emerges from the interweaving elements of the colonizer' and the colonized challenging the validity and authenticity of any essentialist cultural identity. He classifies hybridity as a form of liminal and in-between space, a space that is critical to the essentialist positions of identity and a conceptualization of original culture. He further argues that: "for me, the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather, hybridity to me is the third space, which enables other positions to emerge"²⁷. Thus we can deduce that the third space is a mode of articulation, a landscape of representation, a way to describe the productive and not merely the reflective, a space that paves the way for a new possibility. It is an "interruptive, interrogative, and enunciative"²⁸; a space that engenders new forms of meaning and understanding that tends to erase the blurring limitations of any existing boundaries. According to Bhabha, this third space consists an ambivalent one where cultural representation and meaning have no: "primordial unity or fixity".²⁹

Hybrid identities that exist in this third space are perceived through the conjunction of cultures. They have the ability to possess a certain amount of knowledge about both cultures and transferring them through translating, negotiating and mediating affinity and difference within the dynamic process of cultural exchange and inclusion.

²⁶ Papastergiadis, Nikos. *Debating Cultural Hybridity: Multi-Cultural Identities and the Politics of Anti-Racism*. London: Zed Books, 1997.

²⁷ Bhabha, Homi. *Nation and Narration*. New York: Routledge, 1990. p211

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ K. Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994. p269

In the works dealt with in this study, namely in Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*, female characters are mostly trapped in a status of in-betweenness as it is the case for Nazneen, the novel's protagonist. Indeed, through history women's situation was largely dominated by their men on the one hand and by the colonizer on the other. This status of being doubly oppressed, subdued and silenced in some cases has made it harder for them to cope in a society other than theirs. It has also consisted an obstacle that is hard to surmount, that prevented them from producing their own space. The shift from periphery to center that they achieved whether willingly or unwillingly, consciously or subconsciously, has altered various aspects of their cultural personae and identitarian orientation. By taking into consideration the work of Monica Ali's work *Brick Lane* is a post colonial work, it becomes clear that her constant focus on the relationship between (former) colonizer and (former) colonized constitutes the central theme of her novel. Postcolonial theory centers upon: "the way in which literature by the colonizing culture distorts the experience and realities, and inscribes the inferiority of the colonized people and literature by colonized people's attempts to articulate their identity and reclaim their past in the face of that past's inevitable otherness."³⁰

As for the case of Hanif Kureishi's work, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, the state of ambivalence and in-betweenness is deeply embodied in his protagonist Karim. In the opening paragraph of the novel, we find the 17 years old narrator introducing himself to the reader in a way that asserts his hybrid identity:

"My name is Karim often considered as a funny kind of English man, a new breed as it were, having emerged from two histories. But I don't care, English man I am (though not proud of it), from the south London suburbs and going somewhere".³¹

³⁰ Lye, John. *Some issues in Postcolonial Theory*. 1998. Retrieved from:
<http://www.jeeves.brocku.ca/english/courses/4F70/postcol.php>

³¹ Kureishi, Hanif. *The Buddha of Suburbia*. London: Penguin Books, 1991.p3

From the way he tends to speak about himself, one can observe that he points out three times on his nationality, his belonging and his attitude towards all that. He stresses on the fact of emerging from two different cultures, lands and histories. Kureishi's choice of his protagonist and the way he introduced him to his readers has not been done haphazardly, it is clear that his work contains a direct emphasis on hybrid identity and how it is being expressed in the metropolitan city of London. A side from his struggle to locate himself as a new breed of English man, Karim is also navigating his own way to move out from the suburbs into the heart of the city of London. Karim is desperate to leave the suburban stagnation but also skeptical of social climbing through the move from the center to periphery.

Through this brief analysis of Karim's quote cited above, the struggle of placement and self-location is at its peak. The effort to produce his own space as a hybrid identity is influenced by the place where he lives the metropolitan city of London suburbs, "the margins". He is relegated to a marginal space but not satisfied with it. He is willing to change it through making a shift to the center.

However, in the case of *Brick Lane*, the protagonist, Nazneen is not aware of the shift she has made nor has she tried to embark in it. Nazneen was a typical "suburban" girl who lived in a small village in Dhaka. She was forced to marry at the age of eighteen to a man nearly twice her age who took her away with him to London. The moment she lands in Britain, the struggle to maintain herself begins. During the first years, Nazneen's contact with the outside world was almost negligible; she remained confined with domestic shores that resulted in her social alienation from her surroundings. The first period of Nazneen's arrival at London was marked by a great sense of dislocation and non-belonging, the lived space was constrained only to her house and husband and barely new anything but what was going on outside. Nazneen took longer time to develop her hybridity. Bhabha defines hybridity as a

third space of enunciation or a time-lay created for the sake of explaining the positionality of the individual. He asserts that:

“It is significant that productive capacities of this third space have a colonial or postcolonial provenance. For a willingness to descend into that alien territory...Many open the way to conceptualizing an international culture, based not on exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of cultures’ hybridity.”³²

The view of Bhabha is of a great importance when describing the situation of characters portrayed in both novels. They both exhibit a sense of flexibility towards adopting the host culture. They develop their hybrid identities as a result of their lack of desire and refusal to allow or take on an exact imitation. In this regard, this case of reflection is due to a pre-conditioned separation that is mostly a state of duplication; they are trying to define themselves without using the paradigms of “the other”, refusing the idea of being mimics. When looking for the right definition of mimicry, we find out that it is: “when the colonial discourse encourages the colonized subjects to ‘mimic’ the colonizer, by adopting the colonizer’s cultural habits, assumptions, institutions and values.”³³ However, the term seems tame when comparing it to the two novels’ characters. Their personification as epitomes of hybrid production is challenged but rather enforced to mimic some kind of characterization, lifestyle and behavior on the part of the colonized.

I.3.4. Cartography & third space from a postcolonial standpoint:

When relating third space to cartography, the perception of the third space as an abstract one starts to lose its effectivity. Third space offers a combination of meanings that asserts the complexity of cultural production in post-colonial as well as post-imperial

³²Bhabha, Homi.K. *The Location of culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.p56

³³ Ibid

societies. Indigenous people have adopted the politics of producing maps, which is considered by far as a symbolic process that reinforces their struggle for recognition. In fact, the efforts that are directed towards finding a place to belong, a space of representation did not remain abstract. The need for materializing this space that they tend to produce is related to the production of geographical maps. The production of map-making process and its practice can be viewed as an arena within which subaltern subjects move beyond the complexities of languages and knowledge allowing “ a heterogeneous histories of contending peoples, antagonistic authorities and tense locations of cultural difference.” ³⁴

This process of map-making occurs in contexts of multiculturalism and postcolonial independence. As a part of the processes that aim at re-articulating multiculturalism and inculcating its significance, maps constitute a notable dimension of shifting and highly-laden cultural products.³⁵ Understanding how cartography works consists a crucial step towards achieving a total understanding of postcolonial third space for many interwoven reasons atop of which the change and transformation of postcolonial landscapes due to its powerful spatial metaphor that speaks of something beyond the colonizer-colonized binary. Like social theorists have been occupied with investigating these spatial metaphors, geographers too have been involved in deconstructing these metaphors and likely clarifying how space can be analyzed and represented in ways that have epistemological and political coherence.³⁶ Thus, when talking about indigenous cartographic production, what matters is not so much taken for granted national territory but the possibility of imagining a form of socio-spatial belonging.

³⁴ Ibid,p212

³⁵ Harley, B. «Rereading the Maps of the Columbian Encounter.» *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* (1992): 82.

³⁶ Pratt, G. «Spatial Metaphors and Speaking Positions.» *Environment and Planning*. 1992. p241

Indigenous cartographies also, supplement the cultural sign of postcolonial statehood, adding: “a sense of belatedness to the original structure, interrupting the seriality of its narrative”. Even though indigenous maps were produced in the context of multiculturalism and they acted as a supplement to nationalist narratives by insinuating notions of ethno cultural heterogeneity.³⁷

I.4.Lefebvre’s “the right to the city”: questioning South Asian Diaspora’s right to London

After most of the British ex-colonies achieved their independence, a movement of immigration started to emerge. The flood of immigrants that were heading to the center of the ex-empire was getting higher due to many reasons, atop of which the cultural and historical ties that connect the metropolitan city of London to her ex-colonies, namely south Asian Diaspora towards London brought with it a number of effects and crises that affected several aspects including identity. Bangladeshis consist one of the largest category of immigrant communities that settled in the United Kingdom. Their first arrival dates back to the early 17th century and early 20th century thanks to the east India Company who brought more than thousand south Asians, lascars and workers.

Bangladeshis who came to the United Kingdom held great hopes within them. They expected their ex-master country to provide them with great opportunities, to establish a respected financial life on one hand, and to escape political instability and religious conflicts on the other. Huge numbers of Bangladeshi came to London to search for employment during the 1950’s and the 1960’s. It is important to point at the fact that Bangladesh had undergone a

³⁷A. Teverson, S. Upstone. *Postcolonial Spaces: The Politics of Place in Contemporary Culture*. United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2011.p146

series of political upheavals starting with the partition of India when the countries were partitioned by religious terms.

Furthermore, with the changes made in the immigration laws that took place during the 1970's, a remarkable wave of Bangladeshi came and settled in the UK. they landed in various cities of the united kingdom, most notably "brick lane". By 1970's, Brick lane and a number of streets that were around it, had become pervaded by Bengali immigrants. The Jewish bakeries were turned into curry houses, the jewellery shops were turned into sari stores and the synagogues into dress factories which allowed them to gain an official recognition in April 2001 when the London Borough of Tower Hamlets council renamed spital fields electoral ward to spitafieds and Bangla town. The surrounding streets held the Bangladeshi flavor and were painted red and green reflecting the Bangladeshi's flag.

During the period of the British Raj, small numbers immigrated to Britain who were largely of educated Parsees and Bengalis. The number remarkably enlarged amid the period between the first and the Second World War. The flow of immigration was reinforced and doubled following the independence from British rule in 1947, a date during which India was divided into predominating Hindu India and predominantly Muslim Pakistan.

In the early 19th century, a small number of Indians arrived at Britain as convicts transported by the British colonial government in India. Most of them came seeking work as hawkers and agricultural laborers. As it is clarified above the history of south Asian immigrants, namely the ones coming from Bangladesh and India have deep historical roots in the making up of the British society and culture. Being an integral part of the British society has allowed them to demand certain rights atop of which the right of having a space of their own in the urban center and not only in the suburbs.

In this regard, Lefebvre's conception of "the right to the city" can be seen at once, intricate and fluid. This right to the city is not a mere idea that aims at achieving a certain positive change or a reform; it rather aims at envisioning a fragmented resistance. His conception consists a call for radical restructure in the social, political as well as economic relations within the city and beyond. The right to the city stresses the need to restructure the power relations that underline the production of urban space, by shifting control away from the capital and the state towards urbanity and the inhabitants of suburbs.

The whole conception of space and urban space in particular centers, again, upon Lefebvre's own conception of space in general. As highlighted earlier, space includes perceived, conceived and lived space.³⁸ Perceived space refers to reality objective, the concrete space that people encounter in their daily lives. Conceived space refers to how space is reconstructed in the mind – mental reconstruction-. As for the lived space, it consists an accumulation of the two spaces "perceived" and "conceived" that represents the complexity of a person's actual experience. It is not only a passive stage where conceived and perceived spaces are acted, but it is a representation of constituent elements of social life.³⁹ Thus lived space is strongly tied to the social relations it entails.

Producing the Urban space for Lefebvre involves also reproducing the social relations that are bound up with it. So, the process of producing a space for black British particularly south Asian immigrants who escaped their peripheral home lands toward a new metropolitan space that is characterized by diversity, involves a certain change social relations that are free from any stereotypical assumptions. For Lefebvre, "the right to the city is like a cry and a demand [...] A transformed and renewed right to the urban life."⁴⁰ The core of Lefebvre's notion the right to the city is embodied in the right of the citizens regardless of their origins, to

³⁸Lefebvre, Henry. *The Production of Space*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Lefebvre, Henry. *Le droit à la ville*. Paris: Anthopos, 1968.

have an institutionalized voice in control of social process because the right to the city entails a production of urban space, since those who live in the city “the center” contribute to the body of urban lived space. In the same token, Lefebvre argues that the right to the city:

“Should modify, concretize and make more practical the rights of the citizen as an urban dweller (citadin) and user of multiple services. It would affirm, on the one hand, the right of users to make known their ideas on the space and time of their activities in the urban area, it would also cover the right to the use of the center, a privileged place, instead of being dispersed and stuck into ghettos (for workers, immigrants, the ‘marginal’ and even for the privileged.”⁴¹

Lefebvre here is asserting the right of the minorities whether they constitute members of the working class or immigrants who come from different cultural backgrounds to participate in the social activities conducted by the inhabitants of the center. He also places a great importance on the fact that these minorities who are relegated to a marginal spaces should move beyond the ghettos that prevent them from creating and living their own central space in metropolitan cities.

Indeed, the process of producing space involves a deep concentration on the fact that minorities who are coming from different cultures, histories, places and consequently different spaces. The process of finding their own voice deploys the use of their partial culture in which the definition of “space” of their belonging is being challenged by the struggles against supremacy and hegemony.

I.4.1.The influence of cultural diversity on space production

It is evident that multiculturalism in its diverse pretexts clearly indicates crises in the definition of nation. In spite of their ability to embrace different cultures, races, identities and histories, multicultural societies still treat minorities with some unfair social inequalities that

⁴¹ Lefebvre 1991,b,translated in Kofman and Lebas 1996,p.34

are based on several racial , sexual and cultural differences. The process of finding their own space is restricted and contained because their culture is seen as the literature behind or being belated in time. Although the diversity of cultures and races has contributed to the cultural richness, it has also resulted in the creation of certain conflicts especially with the people whose way of life is different from the canonical one.

Ethnographic minorities with the strain derived from the host society, led them to alienation and confusion in terms of role expectations, values and identity, a shock resulting from the difference between the two cultures: and a sense of up-rootedness and impotence that came out from an inability to function competently in the new culture.⁴² These ethnographic minorities were originally immigrants, as mentioned previously; Britain has been a post imperial city that is characterized by being multi-racial. In this kind of society, immigrant identities went through different crises due to a number of reasons that can be understood through defining the word immigrant: “the term immigrant seems to denote a person who is alien, probably unable to speak English, with different and possibly inferior ways of life and perhaps implicitly, a threat to the existence or continuance of the British way of life”⁴³.

As it is expressed in the quotation cited above, we can come to a conclusion that immigrant people are seen from a narrow perspective that defines them as being an enemy threat to the dominant culture and are getting into a process of "reverse colonialism". Immigrants from the once colonized countries chose Britain not only because of the various opportunities it offers them, but also due to the conception they hold as Britain being their mother country to which they belong by roots. This imperial ideology seems to still exist, despite the fact that nations had gained their independence, they are still considered as the

⁴³ E Butterworth, Ed Weir. *Social Problems of Modern Britain*. Fontana/collins, 1972.p312

ones under the dominance of England; they are still “patronized by the British who view them as colonials rather than as genuine Europeans”⁴⁴. Britain, as an earlier colonizer of some colonies, kept her attitude towards them. Her point of view as a master continued to exist. This has evoked a certain sense of inequality that defies any possible justice on a social basis.

In this regard, the process of producing space starts to be seen even harder to accomplish. Cultural diversity in the regular norms, should provide a fertile ground on which space can be smoothly produced, but rather it seems to hinder the process and bring those hidden minorities to the fore pushing them to adopt the same lifestyle as “the center” searching for a marginal space within the wider sphere of the central one.

I.4.2.Spatial representation in the post-imperial London

Critics have been preoccupied with issues of nationalism and multi-nationalism within multicultural societies. Immigrants who constitute ethnic minorities reveal a sort of connections between postcolonial theories of national culture and the way their identities are performed. They represent the performative nature of national culture by immigrating norms that include social status, dressing and gender roles. The political debates that surround issues of ethnicity, race and cultural differences have caused a crisis in the notion of a nation as a community. In Frederick Jameson’s words: “Culture is not a substance or phenomenon in its own right, its objective mirage that arises out of relationship between at least two groups [N] a group has a culture by itself: culture is the minus perceived by one group when comes into contact with and observes another one “⁴⁵ this concept involves defining culture by its

⁴⁴ Cudjoe, S.R. *Caribbean Women Writers: Essays from the First International Conference*. Massachussetts: Calaloux Publications, 1990.p90

⁴⁵ Jameson, Fredric. *Postmodernism, Or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991.p18

boundaries; culture can be defined by the amount of differences that other cultures show. This sense of multicultural relations results in a kind of spatial problems and consequently representational dilemmas.

The process of self-presentation that involves certain techniques of navigating a space, finds its largest landscape in writing. One of the most significant contexts for contemporary British fiction is Postcolonialism, a term that encompasses a wide range of issues that tackles problems of representation, national identity, race, immigration and multiculturalism. Among the legacies of the empire, is the spread out of the English language which was exported to various areas across the world. This has resulted in the emergence of a generation of writers who produced notable works of fiction that aim at opening a dialogue with traditional forms of British fiction, striving to find “a textual” space where minorities who have different ethnographic backgrounds can break the constrain of silence and ignorance and represent themselves to defy the stereotypical ideologies fostered by dominating cultures’ population.

I.4.3.The production of postcolonial textual spaces

The rejuvenation of space as a crucial critical concept starts with shifting away from perceiving space as an “abstract theoretical terms” such as center, periphery that involve the use of an array of inter-related dyads, namely: metropolitan, center, post colony, and dichotomies of east/west, west/rest.

Space is conceived as functioning within certain framework that might be abstract, text or concrete, context. These positions constitute a conceptual matrix on which a clear understanding of space depends. The process of making space concrete, demands addressing it through literary texts in the light of postcolonial theory. This has been reduced to

conceptual schemas of “center-periphery” which is unfair when it comes to highlight the complexity of the space that post-colonial texts tend to describe. This center-periphery relationship consists a core paradigm that is predicated on the spatial concepts of hegemony and marginality. The shared experiences of displacement and dislocation of immigrants shapes the central themes of postcolonial writings. Writers who have been at home both spatially and conceptually and who later conducted a move from their peripheral towns to central metropolitan city developed a state of ambivalence that seeks a space of representation where they could translate their sentiments of marginality and alienation to their readers. One important concern of these writers who emerged from Britain’s ex-colonies, literally known as Black British Writers, is portraying their traumatic experiences of childhood through writing bildungsroman novels that speak of the development of their main character from childish naivety to adulthood and maturity.

Looking back at their past and revisiting their history occupies large “space” in their writings. Black British writers, whose main narratives are set to talk about ancient oppressions, tend to address the issues that are associated with historical misinterpretations of the black British. They use this textual spaces as an effective tribune through which they attempt to re-inscribe the character of “slave” who has been misrepresented and often portrayed as a mere invaluable “subject” by mostly all discourses. Their ultimate goal is to represent these characters as they really are free from stereotypical judgments that rank them as useless and uncivilized.

These textual spaces constitute a symbolic space onto which different accounts and diverse identities rediscover their belonging and express themselves, a site that allows them to tip toward the mapping and situational representation of the postcolonial metropolis by the individual subject. The task of Black British writers is to find a space of representation and expression, to open their historical record and revisit their past in order to assert their

identities. They tend to re-examine their past and colonial heritage that is said to be the roots of their current problems and dilemmas. Nevertheless, postcolonial theory understands space in a way that praises the textual space and ignores the complex process of production of space in favor of a clear division between real space and social one.

Even though philosopher and critic Henry Lefebvre argues that space is far from being thought of as: “The theatre, the disinterested stage or setting, of action [...] an object distinct from the point of view of subjects”⁴⁶. Postcolonial theory grasps space either as principle of existence or a means through which social forms can be discussed. As Edward Soja highlights:

“Social reality is not just coincidentally spatial. There is no unspatialized reality. There are no aspatial social processes. Even in the realm of pure abstraction ideology, and representation, there is a persuasive and pertinent, if hidden, spatial dimension”⁴⁷

Thus, according to Soja, space is mainly derived from social practices, it is not limited to the projections that shape a habitus, but rather it is the consequence of those projections. By taking into consideration the fact that “space implies the production of meaning, concepts and consciousness of space which are inseparably linked to its physical production.”⁴⁸ That is “the production of meaning”⁴⁹. In this case discourse or textual platform also involves the production of space which asserts that social space and real space are strongly linked.

⁴⁶ Lefebvre, Henry. *The Production of Space*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991.p410

⁴⁷ Soja, Edward. *Post-modern geographies: the reassertion of space in critical social theory*. London: verso, 1989.p46

⁴⁸ Smith, Neil. *Uneven Development*. London: Basil Blackwell, 1989.p77

⁴⁹ Ibid

However, postcolonial theory's understanding of space, which is established on the views of Bhabha and Edward Said, emphasizes on the division between real and social space. For Bhabha, space is identical with the shifting world of social ideas and identity whereas for Said, space is viewed as a pure materiality beyond any discursive analysis. Both of them grasp space as the "interdependency of ideation and materiality that is not entirely conceptualized. In an attempt to investigate this on the light of what Lefebvre suggests, approaches of "illusion of transparency" and "the realistic illusion" are of a great importance here. The illusion of transparency suggests: "entirely as mental space, an encrypted reality that is decipherable in thoughts and utterances"⁵⁰. Speech and writing, in literature and language, in discourse and texts, in logic and epistemological ideation.⁵¹

The realistic illusion, however, suggests that: "things have more reality than thoughts"⁵². Starting from this, we find out that representation accords with reality or defaults on it through misrepresentation: space is: "objectively and concretely there to be measured and accurately described".⁵³ Thus postcolonial textual spaces provide legitimate means of expression that depends on literature written within the "contact zone". In this regard Pratt suggests that: "the interactive, improvisational dimensions of colonial encounters that are so easily ignored by diffusionist accounts of conquest and domination. A "contact" perspective emphasizes how subjects are constituted in and by their relations among colonizers and colonized, or travelers and travelees, not in terms of separateness or apartheid, but in terms of co-presence, interaction, interlocking, understandings and practices."⁵⁴ Pratt describes this contact zone on the light of the colonial relations formed within it. She affirms that: "Social

⁵⁰ Soja, Edward. *Post-modern geographies: the reassertion of space in critical social theory*. London: verso, 1989.p67

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.p64

⁵⁴ Pratt, Mary Louise. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing andTransculturation*. London: Routeledge, 1992.

⁵⁴ Ibid.p6

spaces where disparate cultures meet , clash and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination.”⁵⁵She further suggests that: “the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish on-going relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality and intractable conflict.”⁵⁶

By examining these passages, an ambivalence regarding space is detected. On one hand space is considered as a physical space, the one that contains materiality, “the space in which peoples geographically and historically come into contact”. Pratt through her book, *Imperial Eyes* utilizes space to refer to the formation of identity during encounters between the colonizer and the colonized. She is trying to clarify that the description of space can not only be related to physical acts of colonization; instead it is merely the encrypted reflection of those acts.

I.4.4.Production of Space: From “the right to the city” to “Everydayness:

In order to analyze the effects of cultural dislocation on space production and relate this latter to cultural relocation, a closer look at Lefebvrian “everydayness” need to be conducted. Modern Western societies reflect Lefebvrian notion of everydayness” or “quotidienneté” in the sense that it is tightly connected with the production of social relations and social needs. In addition, everydayness for Lefebvre represents the fragmentation of the everyday life as well as dividing it into sections such as work, leisure and private life. Furthermore, Lefebvre tends to equate the notion of everydayness with dullness and repetitively and the notion of everydayness with dullness and repetitively and the routine of the day-to-day life. The aim of Lefebvre’s use of the notion of the everyday is to provide an understanding of modernity in the context of capitalism and reveal the crucial nature the

⁵⁶ Ibid

relationship between the knowledge of meaning and the experience of life in modern urban cities. In this respect, Lefebvre suggests that:

“everyday life and modernity, the one crowning and concealing the other, revealing and veiling it. Everyday life is a compound of insignificances united in this concept, responds and corresponds to modernity, a compound of signs by which our society expresses and justifies itself and forms part of its ideology”⁵⁷

Furthermore, relying on the quote above, Lefebvre’s focal point when dealing with the concept of everyday and everydayness is mainly related to figuring out how ideologies are built as well as applied to and within everyday life. This latter takes us back to Lefebvrian production of space where the content and the control of everyday life is linked to space production; allowing the elites to take control of space and consequently have a command over the city dwellers’ (citadins) everyday life. Indeed, by taking into consideration the fact that cities, landscapes, plans, buildings as forms of representation of space, it becomes important to hint at the superiority of the ones who control the previously mentioned representations of space such as sovereigns, the local state, or planners and architects since they maintain control over the city as well as the ones inhabiting it. This latter reinforces the hegemony of the elite’s conception of the city.

In an attempt to project this concept on the South Asian Diasporic communities living in London, it becomes essential to denote the control of the hegemonic English culture on the aspects of the everyday life of South Asian diasporants who belong to different culture. This latter is considered inferior due to stereotypical implications that still regard them as colonial objects. In fact dwelling a place that is predominated by different culture causes crisis in the cultural belonging of diasporants communities. The process of dislocation for them becomes a matter of obligation not a choice. They can not maintain the cultural norms of their

⁵⁷Henry Lefebvre. *Everyday Life in the Modern World*. London: The Penguin Press, 1971.p24.

original cultures because of their “inconvenience” to the new space that they tend to occupy. By hinting at Lefebvrian everydayness, again, we find out that the daily lives of people, aside from being controlled by the dominant culture, they are obliged to encounter it whenever they go within the boundaries of the city of London. This cultural encounter is established through art. In this respect, Lefebvre suggests that:

“to put art at the service of the urban does not mean to prettify the urban space with works of arts, rather, this means that time-space becomes works of art and that former art reconsiders itself as a source and model of appropriation of space and time. Art brings cases and examples of appropriate ‘topics’ of temporal qualities inscribed in spaces... let us not forget that gardens, parks, and landscapes are part of urban life as much as the fine arts, or that the landscape around cities were the works of art of these cities... leaving aside representation, ornamentation and decoration, art can become *praxis* and *poiesis* on social scale: the art of living in the city as work of art. Coming back to style and to the oeuvre, that is, to the meaning of the monument and the space appropriated in the *fete*, art can create structures of enchantment”⁵⁸

Lefebvre, in the quote above, tends to unveil the truth behind the art that is used to “prettify” the city, revealing that its main aim is to emphasize the cultural heritage of the city. He suggests that cities constructors tend to be selective in constructing monuments and other public sculpture in order to represent the historical ideologies of the elite’s culture. Therefore, in the view of Lefebvre, these pieces of art represent a form of privileged materialization of space that aims at inscribing the power and the hegemony of the dominant culture. Moreover, they hold within them messages, whether explicitly or implicitly that reinforces the supremacy and control of the ones that erected them.

Thus, the importance of Lefebvre’s notion of everydayness in studying how South Asian diasporic communities especially the ones presented in the novels dealt with, lays in the effects of this notion on the processes of cultural (dis and re) locations since this latter has a

⁵⁸ Lefebvre, Henry. *Writings on Cities*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996.p173.

direct relationship with the dichotomies of strong and weak, supreme and inferior cultures built upon historical and imperious perspectives. Also, this notion is of a great use when it comes to analyzing space production in a place that is prevailed by the elite's culture.

I.4.5.Cultural spaces: South Asian (Dis and Re) location in Britain

To begin with, cultural location as one of the most prominent conceptions that pertains to the post modernist issues around space and place. Among the critics who shed light on the politics of location is Henry Giroux who drew attention to the notion of location in discourses of agency. His analysis is influenced by the ideas of Edward Said and Bel Hooks who have been interested in investigating the struggles within the postcolonial discourse as well as their interpretations as hegemonic sites that make and take cultural formation. Most of the subjects that politics of location suggest are linked to those of agency and structure, knowledge and power as Giroux proposes: “politics of location has provided a new vocabulary for analyzing how we are situated differently in the interplay of power, history and culture.”⁵⁹ Furthermore, the whole discourse of location does not only encompass the notion of boundaries or the ones who have power to draw or re-draw boundaries, but broadly, it contains “space”. Apart from cultural turns that characterize the issues of location, social sciences have revealed also kinds of cultural turn⁶⁰ which has highlighted that locations have not only a “space” but also “time”. These two elements of space and time make up an inseparable relationship in which the materiality of space shapes an important dimension of social life. In this respect Lefebvre writes: “space and the political organization of space [do not only] express social relationships but also react back to them”⁶¹ Lefebvre suggests here that the production and the reproduction

⁵⁹ Giroux, Henry. *Border Crossings: Cultural Workers and the Politics of Education*. Psychology Press, 1992.p26

⁶⁰ Ibid

⁶¹ lefebvre, Henry. *The Production of Space* (Trans Donald Nicholson-Smith). Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991.p8

of social space exists in dialectical relationship with the material base. Not only is the “the social responsive to changes in economic relations but material base is responding to changes in social praxis which must shape the material and the imaginary social landscape”.⁶²

Furthermore, the crucial role that space plays in the constitutions of cultures is embodied not only in the growing recognition that space receives but also within all aspects of world’s experiences which help to deepen the understanding of the contemporary life. In the same token, Elizabeth Houston Jones affirms that:

“Developments in transport and telecommunication technologies, for example have brought up “spaces” closer together, facilitating movements and blurring the boundaries between spaces. The impact of the resultant cultural contact and cultural dislocation upon both individual identities and societies cannot be overstated. Moreover, in theoretical terms, whereas space used to be commonly understood as to be “dead” or “passive” arena in which events merely take place, its active constitute potential has increasingly been realized”⁶³

Henceforth, spaces cannot be considered as merely empty stages upon which people act their lives, but rather, they are deeply embedded with cultural meanings and enriched with power relations that societies require.

Due to the massive post-colonial migration which characterizes the past few decades, the whole world has been rebuilt and reconstructed by cultural hybridity. The notion of homogeneous cultural spaces and times ceased to exist. After the western national space has been penetratingly transformed by ethnic groups; cultural difference has become a threat to the western eternal otherness. Culture as a process of signification is linked to an avoidable

⁶² Ibid

⁶³ Jones, Elizabeth Houston. *Spaces of Belonging: Home, Culture, and Identity in 20th Century French Autobiography*. Rodopi, 2007. Introduction

constant splitting. As in the case of Derridean *Différance*⁶⁴, the sign of culture finds only a temporary anchorage to be endlessly displaced. Thus the tension between the resident and the emergent discourses as Bhabha affirms does not give birth to cultural plurality since this later has become no longer a clearly bordered mosaic, but rather overlapping boundaries that require a constant struggle between the dominant and the emerging cultures.

This struggle has caused the emerging cultures that originate from different historical and ethnographic backgrounds, to feel dislocated, not knowing for sure where they belong. Moving from one country to another is undoubtedly a dislocating experience. In order to successfully establish roots in a new country this certainly demands the immigrant need to get rid of his/ her own culture. Transitional migrants in the modern world paradoxically tend to start setting themselves culturally and socially apart in an attempt to protect their original culture and avoid losing their identities in the process of approaching the host culture.

South Asian Diasporants in particular, suffered from being alienated and relegated to marginal spaces because of their inability to locate themselves in the British culture which holds norms and traditions different from theirs. The signs of dislocation that they exhibit whether consciously or subconsciously affect their process of assimilation and acceptance. In addition, the Eurocentric point of view that is filled with prejudices and stereotypical ideologies, condemns the minority cultures to be their inferior and not “central” enough in comparison to their culture. Such stereotypes hinder the operation of self-location within these diasporants who are already seeking a sense of belonging. Their constant feelings of non-

⁶⁴ The term *Différance* traces its origins from the French language. It was first coined by Jacques Derrida deliberately homophonous with the word difference. It plays on the fact that the French word “*différer*” which may potentially mean both to defer” and “to defer”. He first used the term *Différance* in his paper entitiled “*Cogito et Histoire de la Folie*” in 1963. In an essay that bears the same name “*Différance*”, Derrida signals that *Différance* hints at a number of heterogeneous features that govern the production of textual meaning. Perhaps the first thing is related to the deferral i.e. the notion that words and sings can never completely summon , but rather with a call to other additional words from which they differ. However, the second aspect reflects more to the difference that ends to differentiate elements from one another in order to engender a binary opposition that touches the meaning itself.

belonging have been translated into many literary works in order to reflect the dominance of this term on the contemporary life. As a dialectic process, non- belonging indicates the immigrant's negotiation of the ways in which they are positioned by hegemonic structures of belonging and their provisional locations of non-belonging. This latter is characterized by moments of tension and non-resolution that features the contemporary British society.

The shift of the British society from mono-cultural personae to multicultural personae gave birth to rising debates of multiculturalism, a concept that refers to a kind of cultural diversity that is introduced by certain politics of variation and tolerance. Multiculturalism ,in its broadest sense , centers upon the ways in which societies react to cultural and religious differences and the manners through which different ethnic groups whether belonging to “the central” culture or “the peripheral” one , tend to co-exist, interrelate or influence one another. Multicultural policies typically seek to lessen the fear of cultural difference, dissimilarity and marginality.

However, when investigating the status of South Asian immigrants who constitute a vital part of the contemporary British society, it becomes clear that the aims of multiculturalism, as an adopted policy in Britain, are not fully effective. After being appeased with the western values and culture, they are seen as not fully “British”, occupying a space of in-betweeness due to their differences which led to the emergence of the concept “hybridization”. In fact the challenge for them is not to deal with being “othered” or located in between the dichotomy of us/them but rather, in their disjunct positions that they ambivalently occupy. To illustrate this ⁶⁵idea, critic Bakhtin suggests that:

“The....hybrid is not only double-voiced and double-accented...but is also double-langued; for in there are not only (and not even so much) two individual

⁶⁵M. Bakhtin, ‘Discourse in the Novel’, in his *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. M. Holquist, trans. C. Emerson and M. Holquist, Austin, University of Texas Press, 1981, p. 360.

consciousness, two voices, two epochs... Those come together and consciously fight it out on the territory of the utterance...It is the collision between differing points of view, with new “internal forms”... Such unconscious hybrids have been at the same time profoundly productive historically: they are pregnant with potential for new world views, with new “internal forms” for perceiving the world in words.”⁵¹

Thus, their status of duality, through which a space of enunciation is highlighted, involves new discursive negotiation away from authority and hegemony. Being hybrid is being characterized by holding the principles of two cultures. As a result of cultural differences, being hybrid generates problems of cultural location and consequently identitarian dilemmas. The debates that surround the term “Britishness is of a remarkable importance here.

The issues pertaining to the spatial politics of home for the South Asian immigrants have a lot to do with the conception of Britain as “The Fatherland”.; calling their home countries as motherlands. As a community of mixed descents, it is identified by both; their homelands (India, Bangladesh or Pakistan) and Britain as an adopted home. Their belonging has always been challenged by the notion of “Britishness” and the ideas of whiteness that were bound up with it. Although it may seem that the term whiteness is a dominant element in the British culture, critics such as Bridge and Fedorowich argue that the history of the British world was not exclusively white, taking into account the fact that people from different ethnic backgrounds both white and colored, eagerly chose to adopt the British identity and tolerated many varying degrees in order to be a part of Britain within the white dominion both in the empire and out.⁶⁶The term British South Asian (BSA) shapes an ethno-racial concept that is used to refer to people who originate from India, Pakistan or Bangladesh. The perception of Britain by the BSA is based on viewing Britain not only as territorial or political entity but

⁶⁶Carl Bridge, Kent Fedorowich. *The British World: Diaspora, Culture, and Identity*. Psychology Press, 2003.

also as an imagined community.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, the conception of Britishness apart from being seen as an ideal welcoming homeland is the place where power relations that are often related to ethnicity and, religion, class and so on are basically involved in the definition of the notion of Britishness. Since the start of mass immigration from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh in the period following the war, most of the South Asian immigrants have been represented as trapped between two cultures and troubled between two identities.

Conclusion

Among the contradictions that appeared as a result to the drastic changes happening with the dawn of the twentieth century, notorious debates about space, location, culture and identity have occupied a lion's share in the academic contributions to various spheres among which literature. The end of the Second World War synchronized with liberation movements that led to the independence of most of the colonized nations. Britain, as a former imperial authority, formed the Commonwealth of Nations which is constituted of all the countries that were once British colonies.

The term Commonwealth literature encompassed all the written material by the former British colonies. However, this term has fallen into academic disfavor due to the imperious connotations it held, paving the way to the emergence of the term of Postcolonial literature. This latter has been used alternatively with the term black British literature that describes the literature produced by writers of color or the former colonized subjects. Indeed, the strong ties that connect Britain to her previous colonies led to a movement of "reverse colonialism"⁶⁸,

⁶⁷ Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso, 1991.

⁶⁸ This refers to the observation that after centuries of Eurocentric cultures exploiting the rest of the world for their own economic gain, the rest of the world is – de facto – colonizing these first world countries back mainly through immigration, transforming their societies into multicultural ones and guaranteeing the legitimacy of their presence. For example: England is filling up with people from India and France is becoming populated by Muslims who bring their own culture with them.

since Britain was the favorite direction of immigrants from South Asia and Africa. The shifts achieved by these immigrants from “periphery” to “center” resulted in certain spatial and cultural crises. Their process of producing their space of belonging ;a space that needs to be produced as a result of human intrusion is largely influenced by capitalism and neo-colonialism, a space that is designed and produced within the supremacy of ruling power and as a result of alliance between the state, capital and institutional knowledge as well as social processes.

The idea of “Third Space” which is of a notable importance when digging into the issues of space, conceives the encounter of two different yet unequal social groups in a special Third Space of enunciation where culture is disseminated and dislocated from the interacting groups, paving the way for the invention of a hybrid identity. These various groups that come from different back grounds tend to envision themselves to take a part in a familiar identity that relates to their common space and shared dialogues.

Chapter two:

Cultural (Dis& Re)location in
Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* and
Ali's *Brick Lane*

Chapter two: Cultural (dis&re) location in H. Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* and M.Ali *Brick Lane*.

Introduction

It is no surprise to claim that the “fin de siècle” is the time when the whole world witnessed a moment of fluid transition in which space and time seem to constitute essential factors that directly affect the ability to cross or to produce a complex combination of: difference and identity, belonging and non-belonging, origins and outcomes.

However what has remained unsolved and sometimes marginalized is the controversial issue that surrounds culture. To this end, this chapter provides an analysis of diasporants characters that have gone through a movement of displacement. It is only amid the emergence of the overlaps of displacement that issues of nationalism, belonging, and cultural values became negotiated. Hence, Understanding how immigrants are culturally located and formed in a space of in-betweeness; where there exists an excess of differences usually built upon race, class, and gender, depends on how they come to manage their own strategies of representation and empowerment. Likewise, the aim of this chapter is to investigate how the characters depicted in Hanif Kureish's *The Buddha of Suburbia* and Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* tend to (dis)locate themselves from their original cultures. It also provides a closer examination of their ability to culturally (re)locate themselves and develop a hybrid persona. Likely, cultural engagement may be both antagonistic and affinitive, depending on social articulation of difference that demands an on-going process of negotiation. This latter aims at creating an authorized platform for cultural hybridity; that is the outcome of either a historical transition or a movement of displacement or dislocation.

II.1.Cultural Dislocation in Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*

Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* is a modern bildungsroman that depicts young Karim's journey towards self-discovery. His dual heritage (Indian and English), results in his inability to identify with Englishness which makes him restless and dislocated. The fact of being unable to categorize himself or to relate fully to the place where he has been born and bred, makes him susceptible to a number of changes; notably, seeking ventures that mess up more with his identitarian definition. The novel's events are set in the seventies and the eighties London, a period that was described by being the hardest times for immigrants as racism, discrimination and xenophobia⁶⁹ were rife and vastly spread. Hanif's work portrays characters from different ethnic backgrounds that experience hardships as a result of their differences. These racist orientations of the host country "the center" resulted in most of the novel's characters feeling disjointed and unable to cope as they cannot identify with any of their white co-habitants.

II.1.1. Kureishi's own reflections of cultural (dis&re)location on His Work

In fact, Kureishi's novel *The Buddha of Suburbia* contains so many similarities with his own life which pushed readers to consider it autobiographical to some extent. Hanif Kureishi, like Karim, the protagonist of the novel, was born in Bromley in 1954. His father,

⁶⁹ **Xenophobia** is the dislike of that which is perceived to be foreign or strange. Xenophobia can manifest itself in many ways involving the relations and perceptions of an in-group towards an out-group, including a fear of losing identity, suspicion of its activities, aggression, and desire to eliminate its presence to secure a presumed purity. Xenophobia can also be exhibited in the form of an "uncritical exaltation of another culture" in which a culture is ascribed "an unreal, stereotyped and exotic quality".

who is the descendant of an aristocratic Indian family, was employed by the Pakistani Embassy in London whereas his English mother worked in a shoe shop. At a young age, Kureishi moved to west London in order to study philosophy at King's College. Meanwhile, he had his early plays performed at the Royal Court theatre in Sloane Square.

Kureishi is very multi-talented: author; a playwright, a novelist, a screenwriter, and a filmmaker. His 1984 screenplay for the film *My Beautiful Launderette* was elected for an Oscar. He also wrote the screenplays of *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* (1987) and *London Kills Me* (1991). He is best known by the cinematic adaptation of his works, among them his short story 'My Son the Fanatic' which was adapted as a film by the year 1998. Furthermore, Kureishi's screenplays for *The Mother* in 2003 and *Venus* (2006) were both directed by Roger Mitchell, a talented theater, television and film director.

However, his famous novel *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990) won the Whitbread Prize⁷⁰ for Best First Novel and was produced as a four-part drama for the BBC in 1993. Its events tackles issues of shifts from periphery to center which is the core of the city of London, as Karim engages in a journey of self-discovery: no place seems to be quite what either he, or the reader, expects and that is what makes his novel unique. The novel that he released right after *The Buddha of Suburbia* was *The Black Album* (1995). This latter was followed by a third one entitled *Intimacy* (1998), it was also adapted as a film in 2001 and won the Golden Bear Award at the Berlin Film festival. *Gabriel's Gift* was published in 2001, *Something to Tell You* in 2008. His most recent work is *The Last Word* published in 2014.

⁷⁰ The Whitbread Awards (1971-2005), called Costa Book Awards since 2006, are literary awards in the United Kingdom, awarded both for high literary merit but also for works considered enjoyable reading. The Costa Book Awards are a set of annual literary awards recognizing English-language books by writers based in Britain and Ireland. They were inaugurated for 1971 publications and known as the Whitbread Book Awards until 2006 when Costa Coffee, a subsidiary of Whitbread, took over sponsorship. The companion Costa Short Story Award was established in 2012.

Aside from writing screenplays and novels, he also crafts short story writing. His first collection of short stories, *Love in a Blue Time*, was revealed in 1997, followed by *Midnight All Day* (1999) and *The Body* (2002). All of these collections were gathered in his *Collected Stories* (2010), along with eight new stories.

He is also known by writing non-fiction works such as the essay collections *Dreaming and Scheming: Reflections on Writing and Politics* (2002) and *The Word and the Bomb* (2005). Furthermore, a memoir entitled *My Ear at his Heart: Reading my Father* which was published in 2004.

Hanif Kureishi, along the course of his life as a writer, won a number of considerable literary prizes. He was awarded the C.B.E. for his services to literature, and the Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts des Lettres in France. His works have been translated into 36 languages which made him famous worldwide.

II.1.2. *The Buddha of Suburbia*: A Dislocation's experience

The Buddha of Suburbia is written in the first person narrative where Karim, the protagonist, is the narrator of the book's events. Kureishi's use of the first person narration aims at attracting readers' attention towards identifying with Karim. Nevertheless, Hanif Kureishi exposes the complexity that lies in Karim's ethnic, national, class and sexual identity. The opening lines of the book forecast Karim's self presentation to the readers as: "I am an English Man born and bred, almost. A new breed as it were, having emerged from two

old histories... perhaps it is the odd mixture of continents and blood of here and there belonging and not”⁷¹ Karim’s sense of here and there, a sense of disorientation, a disturbance of direction in the beyond, a restless movement au delà of his borders of identity which is a common problem that children of immigrants face. This problem happens because their “immigrant” parents also find difficulties to relate to the English culture so they find relief in the memories of “home” that comfort them. McLeod elaborates on this by arguing: “to the children of immigrants, the interior knowledge of a distant place is unavailable. Thus their reflections about these places in terms of “home” are often differently constructed”⁷² Karim’s detachment from his origins is due to an identity crisis. Britain during the seventies and the eighties was not as welcoming as the present times. Diaspora of the generation of Haroon, Karim’s father, resulted in a cultural hybridity in Britain that British people didn’t accept.

II.1.3.Cultural Dislocation’s experiences in *The Buddha of Suburbia*

The fear from these ethnic cultures that were infusing in Britain progressed to become a sense of parochialism⁷³ and xenophobia. Being in a “center” and holding an imperialist past still lingers among the British population who looked at these immigrants who come from Britain’s peripheral ex-colonies, with disdain and superiority. Moreover, there was a strong sense of nationalism among Britons against “the other”. Both, Karim and his father epitomize the conception of hybridity in postcolonial Britain. Karim is a mixed race character who is

⁷¹ Kureishi, Hanif. *The Buddha of Suburbia*. London: Penguin Books, 1991.p5

⁷² McLeod, *Beginning Postcolonialism*. p 213

⁷³ Parochialism is the state of mind, whereby one focuses on small sections of an issue rather than considering its wider context. More generally, it consists of being narrow in scope.

caught between two homes, two cultures and cannot wholly identify or relate to the Indian culture nor can he be accepted as a “white” descendant. His mother summarizes this idea by saying: “But you are not an Indian, you’ve never been to India.... What about me? Who gave birth to you? You are an English man I’m glad to say.”⁷⁴ This fragmentation of nationalities results in an obvious identity struggle.

Despite the fact that Karim does look up to his father and respects his ideologies and principles, his own values often clash with his father’s stereotypical embrace of “Indianness”. He preserves the persona of an Indian spiritual “Guru” as he wears: “a scarlet Indian waist coat with gold stitching around the edges”⁷⁵ that he puts on when he organizes his spiritual seminars to English people. If this has to show something, then undoubtedly, it hints at Haroon’s conflict between his Indian up-bringing and English adaptation that makes him unable to “locate” himself.

Perhaps the first “dislocating” step conducted by one of the major characters of *The Buddha of Suburbia* is seen in Haroon’s marriage to Karim’s mother who is white and also in his will in the abandonment of that marriage. Eva’s character also does not have a strong sense of self of identity. She personifies the trendy person that is continuously adapting and evolving to fit into different trends basically to please her surroundings. However, regardless to how superficial she may seem, she has an extreme self-esteem and a strong sense of “self”. Her changing identities which satisfy her thirst for popularity and public admiration consists the basic stone on which her sense of self is founded.

Anwar, Haroon’s childhood friend was originally an Indian character that was the source of inspiration for Haroon. Nevertheless, with evolution of events in the novel, Anwar’s

⁷⁴ Kureishi, Hanif. *The Buddha of Suburbia*. London: Penguin Books, 1991.p232

⁷⁵ Kureishi, Hanif. *The Buddha of Suburbia*. London: Penguin Books , 1991.p6

character constantly transgresses to become more patriarchal and extreme in his traditional Indian beliefs which lead ultimately to his final doom. Anwar's inner struggle to be true to his origins is illustrated in his strong desire to send his daughter for an arranged marriage, in his refusal to modernize his corner shop, his careless attitude towards his marriage, his patriarchal relationship between himself and the women of the family and most notably in his yearning to return home to India.

Anwar's character highlights the problems of being "located" in different culture but trying to dislocate from it in order to preserve his original one. In this regard, McLeod suggests that: "Migrants envision their home in fragments and fissures... the transformation wrought by the experience of migrancy make impossible the recovery of a platitudinous sense of home. Reflections of home seize in pieces only; a sense of displacement always remains".⁷⁶ Anwar has a tighter grasp on his Indian roots and seems to be fearful to lose them. He accuses everyone around him who tries to adapt to Britain by being "seduced by the west"⁷⁷.

Karim on the other hand, finds that his father and Anwar are two extremes of expression of culture, he acknowledges both of them but still tottering between the two due to Karim's mixed parentage that exposed him to a dual heritage. He constantly struggles to identify or relate to the other characters. Despite Karim is half white, The English don't consider him to be white enough to let him play with their children, "Harry back" for example tells Karim that his daughter doesn't go out with wags and that "however many niggers there are, we don't like it"⁷⁸. Harry back's stereotypical judgment reflects his ignorance of the fact of being half White. This inability to identify Karim's ethnicity and inability to accept Karim as an English man is one among other examples of racism that contributes to Karim's ambivalence and cultural dislocation.

⁷⁶ McLeod, *Postcolonialism*, p213.

⁷⁷ Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, p23.

⁷⁸ *ibid*

II.1.3.3.1. Karim's fragmented culture and hyphenated identity

Questions of who I am and where I come from are underlying in Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*. As Hall suggests "identities are constituted within and not outside representation" he alleges that identities: "relate to the invention of tradition as much as to tradition itself which they oblige us to read as an endless reiteration but as the "changing same" "[...] not the so-called return to roots but a coming-to terms with your own roots"⁷⁹

Thus one of the most problematic issues that face diasporants, who achieve moves from their peripheral lands to central ones, is how to culturally locate themselves. Most of the signs of dislocation that they exhibit have a lot to do with their cultural identity that is hyphenated. Hanif Kureishi in his book shows a number of characters that are struggling to identify with either cultures, seeking at the same time approval and acceptance from both, their culture of origin and the culture of the host country. For them London represents a transitional spot where they express their multifarious interconnections with a culture that is different from theirs. The heterogeneous nature of London with its diasporic communities and hybrid cultural forms stimulates a dialogue between one's origin and what they have to be in order to cope perfectly with a new culture. As diasporic populations, they tend to negotiate their cultural identities through what Paul Gilroy terms "the tension between the roots and the routes"⁸⁰. Perceptions of the concepts of home, nation and homeland should be constantly revisited as the encounters of diverse ethnic groups of people imply a varied and impure shape of London. This heterogenic nature of the metropolitan city of London results in the creation of diverse cultural identities that are caught between states of restlessness; they are continuously in a process of transformation and never complete.

⁷⁹ Stuart Hall, Paul du Gay. *Questions of Cultural Identity*. SAGE Publications, 1996.

⁸⁰ Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. 1993.p133

The Buddha of Suburbia also sheds light on the multicultural side of the contemporary Britain. It portrays a collage of diasporic communities living in London using references to British imperial past and its ultimate results of immigration. The whole concept of immigration as highlighted by Williams: “violates Britain’s sense of its secure national borders”⁸¹ Williams claims that the presence of these diasporic subjects in Britain challenges the purity of “white” Englishman’s cultural identity as being: “homogeneous and unitary”⁸². However Stuart Hall in his essay: *The Local and Global: globalization and ethnicity*, suggests that: “the dominant culture’s perception of the immigrant subject is nothing but a mere example of a defensiveness of a narrow, national definition of Englishness, of cultural identity”⁸³. As such, *The Buddha of Suburbia* addresses the realities of contemporary diasporic communities in London, a city that serves as a site of transition that constructs fluid and unstable cultural identities. Hanif Kureishi deals with what Steven Connor calls: “the condition of divided or ambivalent ethnic belonging in Britain”⁸⁴. He also tries to emphasize on the side of London that is being hybridized. In this respect, critic Yousaf suggests that: “*The Buddha of Suburbia* unveils many of the ironies that underlie the British people’s “recognition of Britain” as a multicultural society and of Britain as racially diverse and culturally heterogeneous citizens”⁸⁵. Thus, Yousaf suggests that this novel provides a vivid picture reworks Disraeli’s: “two nations” of “Victorian rich and poor as center and margin, metropolitan and suburban”⁸⁶

⁸¹ Williams, T.B. «A State of Perpetual Wondering: Diaspora and Black British Writers.» *Postcolonial Web: The Culture of Diasporas in the Postcolonial Web*. (1999).p22

⁸² *ibid*

⁸³ Stuart Hall, Paul du Gay. *Questions of Cultural Identity*. SAGE Publications, 1996.p177

⁸⁴ Connor, Steven. *The English Novel in History, 1950 to the Present*. Routledge, 2008.p94

⁸⁵ Yousaf, Nahem. *Hanif Kureishi's The Buddha of Suburbia*. London: Continuum, 2002.p27

⁸⁶ *ibid*

Perhaps the character that personifies cultural fragmentation and hyphenated identity most is the character of Karim. It is no surprise that the feature of belonging to definite culture or place affects one's style of living because he is often inclined to organize his life according to the norms and expectations of the same culture. This can be done by detaching himself from his original culture, the one that he supposedly belongs to. From this point of view, cultural costumes and traditions become extremely important because they connect the person with his/her roots.

However, sometimes the ethnicity and the conditions of the up-bringing tend to "clash" and thus create a situation of problematic ambivalence with reference to one's identity. The feeling of belonging to certain place and consequently to a definite culture is underlying since the understanding of this fact gives them a kind of support. Immigrants of the second generation face a number of difficulties such as being brought up in the principles of their original culture inside their homes and face the culture of the host country outside. This results in a kind of cultural dislocation and ambivalence that could develop sometimes to be a state of alienation.

Is it possible to identify Karim by belonging to the culture of his father Haroon? The answer is no in this case. Karim does not consider himself to be fully Indian; he identifies himself as "a new kind of Englishman" without mentioning his Indian origins. In addition, he also does not identify himself by religion as he is not acknowledging the fact that he is a Muslim. Nevertheless, there are a few similarities that he shares with his father's cultural and ethnic identity; both of Karim and Haroon try to make benefits from their exotic culture as they use it to earn money and win a position in the society, but when analyzing deeply the character of Karim, it becomes clear that he is not that comfortable with the way he looks as it hinders him from assimilating successfully in the British society due to his "Indian tan looks".

Furthermore, when trying to culturally locate Karim in one of these two cultures, we find out that Karim most of the time refers to his belonging as belonging to the “suburbs” where he grew up rather than to any definite culture or ethnicity. The peculiar characteristics of the suburban life influenced his visions more than any of the aspects of his parental cultures. Perhaps, this is the reason why he tends to dislocate himself from his original culture and detaches himself from his actual identity.

However, his perception about himself as an Indian is being challenged by certain crucial events that pushed him to think twice about his belonging. After the death of Anwar, Karim started to think over his non Englishness and reminded him of his Indian roots but Karim remained uncertain about his identity. The only stable truth realized by Karim is the fact that his belonging is being challenged by a number of problematic situations. Karim once said that: “I wanted to run out of the room, back to South London, where I belonged, out of which I had wrongly and arrogantly stepped”⁸⁷. Thus Karim is only sure about his belonging to the suburbs since the other sides of his identity remained uncertain.

Moreover, the cultural fragmentation of being an Indian and a British, taking into account the amount of differences between both cultures, causes Karim to develop a hyphenated identity. Especially that Karim’s feelings of identity denote a complex combination of his roots, origins and attitudes. Furthermore, this young man’s personal identity and cultural belonging is being further challenged by his sexual orientation since his sexual identity is also unstable. He cannot determine himself as a homosexual or heterosexual.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Kureishi, Hanif. *The Buddha of Suburbia*. London: Penguin Books , 1991.p148

⁸⁸ Similar to his ethnic identification, Karim's sexuality is intricate too. He alleges that has no preference and will sleep with anyone, male or female, in spite of the fact that his first really serious and crucial sexual experience is with Charlie. Karim's fluid sexuality situates him in a liminal role, particularly because he does not claim a homosexual or heterosexual identity nor an Indian/British identity exclusively, always caught in a state of in

In addition, in the process of making shifts from lower middle class to upper class, from London to New York, Karim finds himself frustrated. This frustration is due to the difficult situation he goes through because of the color of his skin, by which he is discriminated against. Karim tends to identify with Englishness and locate himself within the British culture. Although he is aware of the impurity of his Englishness, he insists on adopting the English culture in order to be accepted and perceived as an Englishman. This causes a severe problem in his identity which is not strictly determined since it depends on various aspects of his origin, up-bringing and also surroundings.

II.1.3.3.2.The implications of the notion “Black Britishness” on cultural (dis)location:

The term black Britishness has always held racist connotations since it aims at making categorization. This kind of assortment hinders the process of assimilation of the diaspora that belongs to non-British origins. In addition, the term also plays a vital role in nourishing the process of dislocation precisely cultural one. In fact, racism became a noticeable phenomenon in the late 1970's a period during which the British national party won a seat in the Isle of the dogs. The major conflicts and disputation were among white racists and the Bangladeshis. For example, one of the notable characters who have experienced racism is Karim. He encounters the foreshadowings of racism and discrimination at an early stage of his life, consequently: “he was sick too of being affectionately called shitface

betweenness; thus, he is continuously forced to negotiate between such binaries. Karim's early sexual experiences extend from diverse encounters with Charlie to another, quasi-steady relationship with Jamila, his childhood friend. But their sex seems mechanical, to be more about satisfying carnal impulses and, perhaps, simple friendship than anything romantic, without any emotional commitment. Later, as Karim becomes involved in an increasingly upwardly mobile social circle, associating with the arts community and participating in theater, he begins a complicated sexual relationship with Eleanor, an actress that he met lately. Karim truly loves her and describes their relationship as follows: "I'd never had such a strong emotional and physical feeling before" (187). Thus, it was with Eleanor, sex gains (for the first time) an emotional component, a marked difference from his previous sexual relationships.

and curryface, and of coming home covered in spit and chalk and wood shavings”⁸⁹. Furthermore, Karim used to be happy “to get home from school without serious injury”⁹⁰. Karim as a young boy didn’t feel different from his surroundings but the people around him made him feel different and “an exotic “other.

This conflict that takes place between Karim and his surroundings is often being confused by the conflict that is happening within Karim himself. He has always considered himself as an English man in thought, manners and behaviors but he couldn’t transcend his physical appearance that ranks him as “Indian”. The only situation where he came close with his Indianness is when he is around his aunt and uncle whom he thinks that they are the most authentic version of Indianness compared to the rest of the family. Both Haroon and Anwar try to connect the boy with his Indian roots.

However, in spite of Haroon’s ideas and Karim’s own desires of Englishness, the system of education is also built upon racial stereotypes and social prejudices. Most people usually do not understand the fact that some people are just different whether in color, hair texture that tend to specialize every race. Even with the spread of multiculturalism, most native British people still treat others on a racist basis which is mostly illustrated in the novel in the passage that describes Karim’s happiness because of returning home safe from school.

In addition, Karim is also being oppressed by the parents of his friend Helen because they consider him not qualified enough to befriend their daughter. Hanif Kureishi, in here, tends to provide the reader with a vivid picture of the sufferance of immigrants to assimilate in the English society, describing the complexity of the social interactions between immigrants and the English in the everyday life.

⁸⁹ Kureishi, Hanif. *The Buddha of Suburbia*. London: Penguin Books , 1991.p63

⁹⁰ ibid

Karim's family belongs to the lower class. This, in fact, consists a notable obstacle that hinders them from assimilating and fitting properly in the English society. It also hampers their attempts to change their social position especially with reference to their status of being immigrants. Nevertheless, they do not give up to their situation and try to improve their status by achieving a shift to the center of the country "London" where they try relentlessly to enhance their situation. Karim finds this shift a golden opportunity, but he soon realizes that the distance between the high class of London and the world of art on one hand and his Indian identity and his dream of becoming an actor on the other hand is too far from being easily achieved.

Even though Karim's appearance causes him to be discriminated against, he is willingly ready to accept the peculiarities of the other peoples' behaviors and costumes in order to be close to the people of importance. His flexibility allows him to feel more comfortable to interact with representatives of other cultures and social classes. Moreover, his flexibility in relation to his identity is also beneficial in providing him with new opportunities to achieve social shift and to fulfill his dream of becoming an actor. Karim with his efforts to dislocate himself from his original culture tends to hide everything possible that shows his Indianness, as he begins to interact with the upper class, notably with his newly established friendship with Eleanor who sooner notices his accent. In this regard Karim states that: "at that moment I resolved to lose my accent, whatever it was, it would go. I would speak like her"⁹¹. Thus, for Karim, it is more important to get rid of the differences that are preventing him from integrating in the new community than preserving his original identity.

Nonetheless, Karim remains helpless towards what he looks like, and that is why his social identity is closely tied with his experience as an actor. For Karim, the fact of being offered a role of "Mawglyi" consists an opportunity to start a career on the one hand and an

⁹¹ Ibid,p178.

evidence of his exoticism and difference from the English White man on the other. The drawbacks of racism seem to haunt Karim wherever he goes. Thus, one might come to a conclusion that his appearance as Indian hinders his dislocation process since it consists a limitation to his talent as an actor.

From that time on, he has been offered the roles that have to do with his Indianness. English society at that time⁹² usually divided people on a racist basis into their group and the group of others. This kind of division has nourished the process of the ethnic and racial prejudice that resulted in a considerable amount of actions against the representatives of the other ethnicity.

It's certain that Karim is unable to actually dislocate himself from his own origins, culture and identity because being Indian is incarnated in his genes and interpreted by his physical appearance. He has experienced multifaceted signs of racism throughout all the stages of his life even in the middle of his journey to fulfill his dream of becoming an actor, discrimination is still present. The perception of being Indian in a Britain is summarized by the speech of Karim when states that: "Everyone looks at you, I am sure, and thinks: an Indian boy! How exotic, how interesting, what stories of aunties and elephants we'll hear now from him. And you are from Orrington"⁹³. The roles of Indian characters are given to Karim as a result to his skin color. Directors do not pay attention to his talent but rather to the way he looks. However, despite how limiting this may seem, it makes Karim embraces more his identity because it is what enabled him to fulfill his dream of becoming an actor after all.

⁹² It was not uncommon to see signs in Britain during the 1960s proclaiming, "No blacks, no Irish, no dogs". Both cases helped to highlight the treatment of blacks and Asians in Britain during this period. During Prime Minister Harold Wilson's term (1964-1976) he introduced tighter controls on immigration but also introduced legislation that made racial discrimination a legal offence.

⁹³ Ibid,p141.

To conclude with, Major characters in *The Buddha of Suburbia* precisely the protagonist Karim exhibit signs of dislocation from their original culture. Most of them try to challenge the concept of Britishness which is identified by Edutura Lumen as follows:

“Britishness as unified concept does not exist anymore. Rather the term has been so exploited by the different political or ethnic groups that strikes us today especially by its fragmented identity and perspectives. For the white, English population either equal the empire or with England, in an ethno centric view of things. [...] For post-war immigrants, Britishness can either be oppressive or integratory”⁹⁴

Consequently, Britishness is a state of spirit that tends to define the British population regardless to their color, origin or ethnicity.

II.2.Thwarted dreams and cultural (dis)location in M.Ali *Brick Lane*

After the Second World War, many countries gained their independence. The amount of the literary material produced by authors belonging to ex-colonies has taken another direction paving the way towards a new literary scene. Authors who belong to margins of society and culture have achieved a shift and occupied a remarkable central position. The literary material produced by migrants from Britain’s previous colonies has introduced a new horizon to fiction that brought about fresh subjects and genres. They eventually have been termed by certain critics “new English literature” or “immigrant literature”⁹⁵. As Bruce King has emphasized, this change can be traced to the post war immigrants:

⁹⁴ Ibid

⁹⁵ George R.M in his book *The politics of home: Postcolonial relocations and twentieth century fiction* defines it as: “The contemporary literary writing in which the politics and experience of location (or rather dislocation) are the central narratives should be called the ‘Immigrant Genre’. Distinct from other postcolonial literary writing and even from the literature of exile, it is closely related to the two. For the immigrant genre, like the social phenomenon from which it takes its name, is born of a history of global colonialism and is therefore a participant in decolonizing discourses. Like the distance that exile imposes on a writing subject, writers of the immigrant genre also view the present in terms of its distance from the past and future. This genre is marked by a disregard for national schemes, the use of a multigenerational cast of characters and a narrative tendency toward repetitions and echoes – a feature that is often displayed through plots that cover several generations.”

“Unlike previous period changes, this one had its basis in a large influx of peoples from elsewhere, especially those of non-European origins, which resulted in the literature of England taking different perspectives from those in the past, having new concerns and often being focused on the immigrants, their children, and their place in society.”⁹⁶

Like expressed in the quote above, these writers have brought up new concerns to the subject matter of the English literature, enriching its content and giving it diversity.

II.2.1. Monica Ali’s literary profile

Monica Ali (born on 20 October 1967) is one of the non-born British writers who tend to introduce new subjects to the English literature by discussing the Bangladeshi community’s issues in Britain. Ali, as a writer, belongs to the second generation immigrants⁹⁷. Being a British-born writer situates her at the core of the British society and its literary production. *Brick Lane*, Ali’s first novel credited her fame because when it was first published, it drew a huge amount of attention due to the author’s mixed race and ethnic background as well as its theme.

Ali published her debut novel in 2003. It made a new piece of art to be added to the contemporary British panorama of literature. It was short listed for the man Booker prize in 2004 and Monica Ali was included in the Granta list of novelists. The novel was seen to be a literary success which brought Ali to one of the forthcoming major figures in the literary scene. However, the reception of the novel gained critics as much as it gained praises. Chief criticism was held on the ground of Ali’s presentation of the Bangladeshi community in

⁹⁶ King, Bruce. *The Internationalization of English Literature*. Oxford, 2004.

⁹⁷

Britain. She was accused that she did not represent the Bangladeshi immigrants in a good manner and that is because she is not one of them (as they claim).

II.2.2. *Brick Lane*: Cultural (re) location between fact and fiction

The novel focuses on the life of Nazneen; a Bangladeshi woman who comes to London after an arranged marriage to man who is twice her age. Broadly speaking, *Brick lane* tackles issues related to discrimination, integration as well as the notion of belonging and that of exclusion. It also brings to the fore the sufferings of the ethnic minorities and their struggle for visibility and recognition. The novel can be labeled as bildungsroman since it concentrates on the personal development of a Bangladeshi woman, Nazneen, in England. The title of the novel itself refers to an area in East London that is mainly inhabited by Bangladeshi. In this respect, Yassmin Hussain suggests that Brick Lane is the representation of transitional space where people are caught between success of surmounting their problems and stay in their newly established homes in Britain, or failure in achieving that, and leave back to their original homelands.⁹⁸

Furthermore, Ali's novel tends to explore the vast theme of immigration providing vivid pictures of the shock of arrival, the process of settlement and the eventual problems resulted in the process of displacement from one country to another, especially when the country left is considered peripheral and marginalized.

The process of displacement involves also a process of dislocation from one's own culture which will later result in an attempt of relocation. Nazneen is forced to come to London due to an arranged marriage whereas her younger, beautiful sister Hasina has eloped

⁹⁸Hussain, Yassmin. *Writing Diaspora: South Asian Women Culture and Ethnicity*. Burlington, 2005.

with her lover for a love marriage without her father's consent. This has pushed her father to send his elder daughter Nazneen away with Chanu to avoid another scandal.

When Nazneen lands in Britain, she encounters many problems atop of which communication. Nazneen is unable to establish dialogues or start a conversation with her surroundings due to her ignorance of the English Language. She also finds out that Brick Lane community is so conservative that she is even banned from going out alone.

Another problem is homesick. The constant feeling of homesick hinders the process of assimilation and "getting-used" to the new home. She first loses her first baby "Raqib" but later she gives birth to two daughters Shahana and Bibi who later helps her to learn English. However her life changes when she starts a Romantic relationship with young British-born Bangladeshi, Karim. She develops an affair with him because she feels that he is the only one who cares for her. This relationship makes her excited but at the same time guilty. Throughout the course of the events, she realizes that Karim resembles her husband Chanu in the sense that they both try to dominate her and control her life. So, she eventually decides to leave him and also settle on not going back to Bangladesh with her husband Chanu.

Indeed, the novel was remarkably controversial surrounding the fact that Ali was seen as westernized writer who writes about a community she does not belong to. In addition, she has been a subject for a heated debate due to her multi-faceted views that gathered both: political and racial exploration of an ethnic minority that has been long marginalized in Britain. Part of the criticism directed to Ali was on her choice of characters and the way she treats them. She has been accused by portraying them in negative and stereotyped way.

Nazneen has been the protagonist and the focal character of the novel.. The journey of her self-actualization and resilience to accept her new life in a new society has been traced since her childhood making the novel a bildungsroman. Nazneen lives in an isolated world of

her own; a world that is affected and not influenced by what is going out of the Tower hamlets in East London where she lives. She spends her life in a small apartment surrounded by her neighbors whom she has not established any kind of relationship with them yet. What stimulates her isolation, aside from being homesick, is her lack of knowledge of the English Language: “Nazneen could say two things in English: sorry and thank you. She could spend another day alone. It was only another day.”⁹⁹ If this quote taken from the novel, has to highlight something, it would arguably emphasize on the importance of language as a basic tool through which immigrants can assimilate and co-exist with the host society. The feeling of non-belonging and isolation is an ultimate result of the absence of communication and an obvious obstacle that encumbers the process of relocation in the culture of the host country. Nazneen finds relief in reading Quran, hinting at the fact that religion is a surrogate for her lack of language, offering Nazneen comfort within the boundaries of her social and cultural isolation.

Moreover, Monica Ali portrays her protagonist not as a flat character but rather as a complex one that has the will to change and find a way to overcome the drawbacks of the cultural dislocation it goes through. Nazneen’s character manifests signs of acceptance of the culture of the “other” and the possibilities of new cultural affiliations and consequently new chances to assimilate and adapt with new values of the English culture. That is when she starts to break the boundaries that stand between her and her surroundings as well as the external world. Nazneen is the representation of many humble eastern women who come and settle in the center under the guidance of their husbands. The fact that she comes from a traditional family makes her unable to rebel or even to speak up her mind.

⁹⁹Ali, Monica. *Brick Lane*. London, 2004.p7

Nazneen believes that all what is happening to her is her fate, and it is pointless to “kick against fate”¹⁰⁰. She appears to conform to the teachings of her mother, who instructs Nazneen that it is a woman’s duty to “accept her sufferings with indifference”¹⁰¹ so the troubles that face Nazneen are, above all, related to her status as an immigrant from a different “ethnic group”, and also as a woman which makes her doubly alienated and culturally confused.

II.2.2.2. Alienation of the liminal self

The fact of being constantly seen as “the other” in the host society is a significant factor that causes alienation. Even though immigrants coming from British ex-colonies view Britain as their mother country to which they belong by roots, British kept their imperialistic view towards them and regarded them as colonial subjects rather than genuine inhabitants.

Their point of view as masters remained the same. In this respect, Tan suggests that: “[in the novel] the deliberating feeling of being an outsider, not quite being a part of the culture that one is surrounded by, is also embodied by the character of Nazneen’s husband, Chanu.”¹⁰² Chanu as an intellectual character is aware of the fact that the colonial process of England is still valid and the imperialistic perspective of the British is still present as they continue to look down at immigrants. In this regard, Chanu states:

“All these people here who look down at us as peasants know nothing of history... in the sixteenth century Bengal was called the paradise of nations. These are our roots. Do they teach you

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, p10

¹⁰¹ ibid

¹⁰² Ann, K. and A., (2007). “Caught between Worlds The Clash of Cultures and of Generations in The Work of Monica Ali, Jhumpa Lahiri and Zadie Smith.” *Territorial Terrors: Contested Spaces in Colonial and Post-colonial Writing*. Ed. Gerhard Stilz. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann. Pp. 229

things like this in school? Does Shahana know about the Paradise of Nations? All she knows about is flood and famine. Whole bloody country is just a bloody basket case to her”.¹⁰³

Chanu in this passage is emphasizing on the fact process through which the British tend to represent immigrants and ethnic minorities as their inferiors. He points out at the fact that Britain tends to provide a negative image of these countries in order to reinforce their status and feelings of inferiority.

Shahana, Nazneen and Chanu's daughter, represents second immigrant generation. She doesn't know anything about her original country except what is being taught to her by friends or in school. By developing a westernized way of thinking, she rejects her identity and despises her original culture. She dislocates herself fully from any potential ties that would lead her to accept her actual identity and celebrate her original culture. Shahana goes further to adopt all what is western all what is NOT in her culture. She starts wearing miniskirts and jeans, challenging her father who completely disapproves the way his own offspring dresses.

However, Chanu himself consists a self-contradict character. Even though he rejects the British culture, he seems to praise it at many points especially when he tends to distant himself from the other Bangladeshi immigrants as well as his constant use of Shakespearean lines which proves that he is caught in a status of inbetweenness (in the middle of two cultures). In this regard, Catriona Mackenzie states that: "Nazneen's husband Chanu is similarly caught between two states. The more his desire for recognition is frustrated, the more he feels alienated both, from the East London Bangladeshi community, which is driven

¹⁰³ Ali, Monica. *Brick Lane*. London, 2004,p185.

by internal dissensions, intergenerational conflict and hostility towards the dominant culture.”¹⁰⁴

What strengthens the feelings of alienation, aside from dilemmas of non-belonging, is the act of being “othered”, not only on the basis of being originated from an ex-colony but rather as being “of color” since this ideology was inherited within the British. Also, another aspect that leads to alienation is preserving one’s original culture. When Nazneen goes out with her husband Chanu, wearing her Sari, the difference between her and the English women is explicitly revealed. Ali describes such scene as follows: “A pair went by who were differently dressed in short dark skirts looking and whispered together. They walked and laughed, and looked at her over their puffy shoulders”¹⁰⁵ Thus, what stimulates feelings of alienation is being culturally rejected by the host country or at worst situation, they might be considered as exotic foreigners. This undoubtedly results in a feeling of non-belonging which prevents these immigrant groups from assimilating. Ali defines unbelonging in her essay “*where I am coming from*” by these words: “Growing up with an English mother and Bengali father means never being an insider...standing, neither behind a closed door, nor in the tic of things, but in the shadow of the doorway”¹⁰⁶.

II.2.2.3. Transformation of the liminal self: Nazneen’s assimilation & cultural (re)location

Nazneen, the novel’s central character, symbolizes a typical Bangladeshi woman. She manages to raise her two daughters Shahana and Bibi in London suburbs. She lives in a world

¹⁰⁴ Mackenzie, C., (2007). “Relational Autonomy, Sexual Justice and Cultural Pluralism.” *Sexual Justice/Cultural Justice: Critical Perspectives in political Theory and Practice*. Eds. Barbara Ameil, Monique Deveau, Rita Dhomoon and Avigail Eisenberg. Oxford shire: Routledge.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, p28.

¹⁰⁶ Ali, M., “Where I’m Coming From”. *The Guardian* (June, 17, 2003), June, 25, 2015
<http://books.guardian.co.uk/news/articles/0,,979007,00.html>

of her own where she escapes to her memories of early childhood in Bangladesh. In a way, she still lives in the fantasy of the past. Unlike her husband Chanu who tends to paradoxically embrace the Western Culture and her teenage daughter who is typically rebellious British girl.

Nazneen wraps herself in her memories and refuses to get out of the shell of her old country customs. She barely interacts with her surroundings or familiarize with the life inside her chartered apartment. *Brick Lane* follows the struggle of Nazneen to overcome her situation of helplessness and non-visibility. She is doubly subdued by edifices of sexism on the one hand and racism on the other. Nazneen grows up believing totally in fate. She believes that no one can change fate they just follow it. Her main principle is: “since nothing can be changed, everything has to be borne and fate will decide everything in the end, whatever route you follow”¹⁰⁷ Nazneen develops such concepts as a result of growing up in Bangladesh. Her mother believes to a great extent in fate which caused Nazneen to follow her steps. She suffers from the death of her mother first and later her son. Her life in London was also at stake sometimes. She is married unhappily and without love, leading a tough life. She misses her sister Hasina and worries about her very much but she is unable to go back to Bangladesh to see her or even bring her to London. She suffers a lot from missing her but she bears it due to the belief in fate. She reckons that it is her fate that determines this and she should surrender to it, accept and live with it. However, when she meets “Karim” her fated lover, she begins to question everything including fate. She eventually learns that fate is changeable and finally realizes that she is the only one that can change her fate.

Nazneen, as a traditional Bangladeshi woman, finds difficulties in establishing herself in the British society due to the difference in culture. Life in London is tough to her; she has no friends and unable to communicate in English, back in her first years before she became brave enough to intermingle with the British society. Her sister and her daughter

¹⁰⁷ Ibid,p14.

affect her to a notable extent. Nazneen always writes letters to her sister to tell her about her new life and to learn about Hasina's life which worries Nazneen. She blames her sister for what is happening to her because she thinks that she is "kicking against her fate".¹⁰⁸

Hasina, unlike Nazneen, is a rebellious girl who is not obedient and submissive to Bangladeshi traditional norms. She manages to choose her own life and refuses to let others control her. In the letter, Hasina tells her sister about her happiness after she eloped with a man whom she fell in love with. Nazneen starts to question if Hasina was following the plan of fate or she was deviating from it. Meanwhile, She admires the fact that her sister could know the taste of love. However, Hasina in other letters tells her that she is being beaten by her husband and tells her about her decision of running away one more time. Nazneen, again, admires her decision and bravery to stand against fate and change it. She is fascinated by her sister's strength and starts to think about her life.

Being dislocated from her own original country and her own culture does not free her but rather, it tends to tie her more with herself. Nevertheless, Nazneen manages to reconstruct a hybrid identity and be able to culturally accommodate with the British society. She is still wearing Sari while "skating" and still being a housewife, cooking rice and dhal¹⁰⁹.

Nazneen embodies what Bhabha terms: "the reinvention of the subject"¹¹⁰ within the new "international space", in which the subsequent recreating of the self is incorporated by "unexpected juxtaposition" and disorientations¹¹¹. Nazneen starts to relocate herself in the British society and learning the English language. Without fail, language is essential to establish a successful communication. Knowing the language would make it easier to open the doors of the host culture; However, Chanu, doesn't approve the idea. He claims that

¹⁰⁸ Ibid,p10

¹⁰⁹ An Indian food.

¹¹⁰ Bhabha, Homi.K. *The Location of culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.p311

¹¹¹ Ibid

Nazneen is here to be a mother and she doesn't need English anyways. Nevertheless, she gradually learns English especially after her daughters were born.

The situation of Nazneen resembles the situation of most women who are denied the chance to learn and work. In addition, being able to establish conversations in English gives women chance to find jobs and make their own income which is against the principles of the Bangladeshi culture. When Nazneen wanted to work her husband replied: "why should you go out? If you go out, then people will say, "I saw her walking on the street. And I will look a fool. Personally, I don't mind if you go out, but these people are so ignorant. What can you do?"¹¹² This shows that even after leaving Bangladesh, Bangladeshi immigrants carry with them their way of thinking. For instance, Razia is isolated because she started to wear westernized clothes and learn English.

II.2.3.Chanu's cultural dislocation on the light of postcolonial theory

Ali, aside from portraying second generation immigrant characters that are culturally confused, she also depicts characters that belong to the first generation immigrants. These characters, as portrayed in the novel, have left their homelands heading to Britain, holding dreams and hopes of success and well-being. Nazneen's husband Chanu is one of the characters that serve as the epitomes of a typical first generation immigrant that is appeased with the traditional norms of his mother country's culture. The shift that he has achieved, from a peripheral place that is characterized by specific culture, caused him to feel culturally troubled and unable to cope flexibly in his newly established home in Britain. In fact, this was the case of most of the immigrants who came to settle in Britain in 1970's. In an attempt to explain how immigrant characters are portrayed in English literature, Kirpal claims that:

¹¹² Ibid,p45.

“Characters in expatriate writing are racial/national types: Negroes, Africans, West Indians, and Indians. They are their racial, national identity rather than their provincial selves. This is a very interesting feature of Third World expatriate literature, because in stay-at-home writing, the national/racial identity gets submerged in the regional, tribal, communal identity. Living on at home, novelists tend to depict society through particulars of caste/kin group, tribe, region, etc. But in expatriate writing, the concept of nationality/race is rather strong.”¹¹³

Indeed, Chanu confirms what is stated in the quote above. In this novel, he is portrayed as a forty years old man who spent sixteen years in Britain. He first returned home to find a suitable bride and it was then when he married Nazneen. The reason that led Chanu to depart to Britain was his lust for wealth and success. His commitment to : “ the simulacrum of England as the promised land is characteristic of south Asians immigrating in hope of financial gain and not being able to return home as a success”¹¹⁴ Indeed, in his first days in Britain, Chanu suffered from poverty and hunger. He says that:

“When I came I was a young man. I had ambitions. Big dreams. When I got off the aeroplane I had my degree certificate in my suitcase and a few pounds in my pocket. I thought there would be a red carpet laid out for me. I was going to join the civil service and Private Secretary to the Prime Minister.... That was my plan.”¹¹⁵

The high expectations he held and the glittery image of Britain as the Promised Land was destroyed by the harsh reality. Chanu did his best to become a part of the English culture. He had his first degree in English literature in his mother country to prepare himself for a smooth

¹¹³ Kipral. *The third world novel of expatriation*. New Delhi: Sterling, 1989.p120

¹¹⁴ Pataki, É. (2011). ‘Going somewhere’: the nomad and the tourist in Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane*, Hanif Kureishi’s *The Buddha of Suburbia* and Nirpal Singh Dhaliwal’s *Tourism*. Retrieved 08 June 2015 from http://www.theroundtable.ro/Current/Literary/Eva_Pataki_The_Nomad_and_the_Tourist_in_Monica_Ali_s_Brick_Lane_Hanif_Kureishi_s_The_Buddha_of_Suburbia_an.pdf

¹¹⁵ Ibid,p374.

integration in the British culture. As Kripal believes, there are three main factors that facilitate the adjustment of an expatriate: “the immigrant’s reason for emigration: has own ability to adapt to the new environment, and his experience in the host country”¹¹⁶. Chanu, throughout the course of the novel is depicted as having many troubles that repress his social integration and professional development. He justifies these obstacles as the result of the division that they make between them and “us”.

Chanu has come to a conclusion that the fantasy he had about England doesn’t exist. He also comes to believe that there exists discrimination in Britain. He says: “if he painted his skin pink and white then there would be no problem... He warned Nazneen about developing relationships with “them”, he says: “all the time they are polite, they smile, they say ‘please’ this and “thank you’ that. Make no mistake about it, they shake your hand, and with the left they stab you in the back”¹¹⁷. Indeed, even when reviewing the whole novel of *Brick Lane*, we find out that the novel itself is populated by Bangladeshi characters who came to Britain as immigrants and settled in the Towel Hamlets street which is specifically inhabited by Bangladeshi people. As a matter of fact, this town has been transformed into a Bangladeshi area, and hardly ever a British descendant can be found. Even in Chanu’s office, where he works, the only British characters who are given names are Willkie and Mr. Dalloway. All the other characters, especially when they are unnamed, are portrayed either as threatening their lives, spitting on them, causing harm to their properties or discriminating against them by uncovering veiled girls and removing their Hijabs in an attempt to make them feel worthless and degraded.

Likewise, In order to follow the progress of Chanu’s cultural dislocation in Britain and judge whether his attempt of cultural relocation and assimilation is a success or failure, we must investigate the complexity of this process. To this end, Chanu’s character is going to be

¹¹⁶ Kripal, V. *The third world novel of expatriation*. New Delhi: sterling, 1989.

¹¹⁷ Ibid,p53

studied on the light of the postcolonial theory precisely the concepts of: hybridity, mimicry, double consciousness and inbetweenness. Correspondingly, Chanu's experience of being alienated will be studied in the context of exclusion, failure and racism.

Firstly, Chanu represents a stubborn Bangladeshi immigrant who tends to justify his failure to assimilate and cope with the British culture by assuming that his original culture is the best. Cormack points this out by stating: "[Chanu] constructs a mythic Bangladesh to compensate for his failure to succeed in the English culture."¹¹⁸ Indeed, this information about Chanu is confirmed in the scene where he asks his daughters to recite Bangladeshi poems Tagore, to make them familiar with their roots¹¹⁹.

Cormack, again, comments on this by saying that Chanu is trying to deny the discrepancy between: the utopian Bangladesh and the one that Hasina keeps talking about in the letters sent to her sister Nazneen. Perhaps his attempt to preserve the Bangladeshi roots to his daughters is due to his own sense of rootlessness and failure to assimilate and to be accepted in the British culture.

Contrarily, he refuses to be compared to any of his peers from the Bangladeshi community, simply because he sees himself better. Chanu's pride in being able to pursue his studies and attain a degree makes him feel superior to his Bangladeshi peers. He tends to distance himself from the peasants by highlighting the fact that he is an educated man. Chanu, without paying attention, is falling into mimicry. In this respect, Tyson suggests that: "it is common among colonial subjects who desire to imitate the colonizing culture in order to, on

¹¹⁸ Cormack, Alistair. "Migration and the Politics of Narrative Form: Realism and the Postcolonial Subject in Brick Lane." *Contemporary Literature*, Volume 14, Number 4 (2006): 695-721. Web. August 15, 2015.

¹¹⁹ Rabindranath Tagore (7 May 1861 – 7 August 1941), was a Bengali polymath who reshaped Bengali literature and music, as well as Indian art with Contextual Modernism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Author of *Gitanjali* and its "profoundly sensitive, fresh and beautiful verse", he became the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913. In translation his poetry was viewed as spiritual and mercurial; however, his "elegant prose and magical poetry" remain largely unknown outside Bengal. Tagore introduced new prose and verse forms and the use of colloquial language into Bengali literature, thereby freeing it from traditional models based on classical Sanskrit. He was highly influential in introducing the best of Indian culture to the West and vice versa, and he is generally regarded as the outstanding creative artist of the modern Indian subcontinent.

the one hand achieve acceptance from the colonizer and, on the other, avoid the shame of being regarded as inferior due to their different cultural origins.”¹²⁰ Indeed, Chanu’s belief in the superiority of the English culture over any other one is manifested in his own sense of superiority. He supposes that by owning a degree in English literature, he can be considered as an equal to any English man. However, the degree he has got from Dhaka University has absolutely no value in Britain.

Furthermore, what hinders his cultural relocation in Britain is racism. Chanu has come to a conclusion that no matter how hard he tries to look like an English man, he will not attain the respect and acceptance that he thinks he deserves. As Bhabha defines mimicry: “the process by which the colonized subject is reproduced as “almost the same” but not quite”¹²¹ and that explains what has been said above. Moreover, not being accepted by the English culture, results in a feeling of exclusion. Chanu’s sensation of exclusion is closely tied to how immigrants who come to settle in Britain tend to inhabit deprived areas that hardly witness progress. By projecting this view on Chanu’s status, it becomes reasonable to assume that living in Brick Lane contributes in Chanu’s experience of exclusion. Moreover, the resistance of the native British to the flood of immigrants has resulted in discrimination against them, especially when it comes to work. Chanu’s skills are not valued and this is due to his skin color and Bangladeshi accent.

In addition to that, the fact of being located in between two cultures, an original one and an adopted one causes Chanu to feel culturally dislocated. It pushes the character of Chanu to fall into dual consciousness¹²². As it is the case with the colonization that asserts the

¹²⁰ Tyson, Lois. *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide*. Second Edition. New York/London: Routledge, 2006.p421

¹²¹ Ibid,p122.

¹²² Dual consciousness is a concept developed by Frantz Fanon in his book *Black Skins, White Masks*. It deals with the nature of the colonized subject, and the way in which they must simultaneously embrace two different cultural identities. It is mostly used in discussions of post-colonialism, but is also important to other fields within critical theory. For a more understanding of this notion, the original concept "double consciousness" as a term, was first coined by W. E. B. Du Bois to refer to his famous theory of African American "double consciousness."

superiority of the colonizer over the colonized and the urgent need for the colonized to be upraised through the colonial contact, Chanu feels superior to his countrymen. He tends to look down to them because they have nothing and came to Britain by “jumping off a boat” possessing only “the lice in their heads”¹²³ while he came to Britain possessing a respected educational degree. He actually finds it unfair to be discriminated against and treated the same way as them.

All in all, Chanu’s contradictory views of both his own culture and the English one have resulted in his cultural dislocation. After the movement of displacement that he went through, he became culturally confused because he failed to gather the values of both cultures and become a hybrid character. In addition, by falling into double consciousness, Chanu could not consider himself neither belonging to the British culture (due to the discrimination and racism) nor to the Bangladeshi one because he considers himself to be superior than his fellows Bangladeshi countrymen which further contributes into his feelings of failure and unhominess.

II.2.4. Karim’s confused cultural inclinations

Karim, Nazneen’s lover at one point in the novel *Brick Lane*, represents one of the second generation immigrants. Karim, a character that is Bangladeshi by origins, was born and bred in London. He is the chairperson and one of the spokesmen of a racist group called “Bengali Tigers”. This latter is responsible for fighting for Muslims’ rights and defending their culture against all sorts of racism and discrimination. In spite of Karim’s adherence to his original culture (the Bengali and the Muslim one), he still looks like a person who is appeased with the English culture. Nazneen notices this. She says:”when he spoke in Bengali

The term originally referred to the psychological challenge of reconsidering an African heritage with a European upbringing in slavery and education.

¹²³ ibid

he stammered”¹²⁴ However when he used to talk in English he was very fluent. Karim’s aim behind establishing the “Bengali Tigers” was to feel that he belongs to a group, to a culture that he believes to be his original one. Nonetheless, Karim is still unable to culturally locate himself. He is caught in between two cultures and unable to identify with any. In one passage, he is described: “He had a new style. The gold necklace banished; the jeans, shirt and trainers attire went as well ... Karim put on Punjabi pajama and skullcap. He wore a sleeveless fleece and big boots with the laces left undone at the top.”¹²⁵ The quote taken from the novel shows that adopting two different cultures at different times and sometimes making fusion between them is a sign of cultural confusion. Karim is not firm about which culture he wants to be identified with. Perhaps it is his hyphenated identity that prevents him from belonging to one precise culture. For instance, when Karim has been involved in a physical (sexual) relationship with Nazneen, he knew deep inside that it is forbidden in Islam and it defies the values of his original culture, but he couldn’t secede from it. If this has to show something, then it is definitely his inability neither to dislocate himself from his original culture nor to relocate himself in the British culture.

II.2.5. Second Generation Migrants: Rebellious offspring:

Young characters are portrayed in the novel as being caught in between denial and acceptance of two different cultures: their original culture and their native one. For instance Chanu believes that if his daughters Shahana and Bibi adopt the Western culture; he will have no power over them. Fearing this to happen, he decides to educate them more about their Bangladeshi origins. He starts telling them stories about the glorious past of Bangladesh in order to make them feel proud of their origins. He teaches them about Bangladeshi culture and literature and forces them to speak Bengali when they are home. He keeps teaching them

¹²⁴ Ali, Monica. *Brick Lane*. London, 2004.p34

¹²⁵ Ibid,p409.

history because he is aware that history constitutes a major part of flourished cultures. In this regard, Cabral suggests that:” culture is the vigorous manifestation on the ideological or idealist plane of the physical reality of the society that is dominated or be to be dominated”¹²⁶. Cabral here emphasizes on the fact that history is a part of culture that needs to be celebrated. Second generation immigrants are born and bred in Britain. They believe that their original roots are in an alien land. A mysterious place, on which, they do not know anything except what is being said about it by their parents, or the media. In this passage, Ali portrays Shahana, Chanu and Nazneen’s daughter, in a way that expresses her denial of her own original culture:

“Shahana did not want to listen to Bengali classical music...she wanted to wear jeans. She hated her Kameez and spoiled her entire wardrobe by pouring paint on them. If she could choose between baked beans and dhal, it was no context. When Bangladesh was mentioned she pulled her face, she did not know and would not learn that Tagore was poet and Nobel Laureate and no less than true father of her nation.”¹²⁷

This passage shows the extent to which the tension of being located in the middle of two cultures can reach the degree of hate and contempt towards one’s original culture. Shahana feels angry about belonging to an “inferior” culture and tries hard to fully dislocate herself from it by convincing her father that; by being born in Britain, she becomes culturally and intellectually British. As Homi Bhabha suggests: “ the powerful influence of a different culture will cause a tension between the demand of identity states and the demand for a change in identity and mimicry represents compromise to this tension”¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Amilcar Cabral, *Our People Are Our Mountains* (London: Committee for Freedom in Mozambique, Angola, and Guinea, 197. p. 21

¹²⁷ Ali, Monica. *Brick Lane*. London.2004.p189

¹²⁸ Bhabha, Homi.K. *The Location of culture*. London: Routledge.1994.p86

Furthermore, not only Shahana that is going through such denial, also Jorina's son became an alcohol addict. Dr. Azad's daughter has adopted the habit of going to pubs; even Shahana is drawn to the western lifestyle. She buys English products that are for skin moisturizing and hair care asked for piercing and tattoos. In addition when her father Chanu proposed the idea of getting back home, she called it "kidnap" and totally refused the idea telling him: " I didn't ask to be born here"¹²⁹. Moreover Tariq, Razia's son is also troubled in his identity and cultural belonging. He escapes from his reality by addicting drugs and becoming rebellious. When Razia finds out that he has sold some of the house's furniture to provide money to buy drags , she does not go furious about it. She, rather, understands that it is the ultimate result of being raised upon the values of two different cultures. She states:" How would he know what he wants, how can he know anything now"¹³⁰.

All in all, Ali's depiction of troubled teenagers that are defined as the offspring of the first generation immigrants, born and bred in Britain, emphasizes the notion of cultural dislocation as the ultimate result of displacement. Moreover, the fact of being culturally located in the middle of two cultures and living in a multicultural society such as Britain, causes severe crises on identity and consequently on cultural belonging.

Conclusion

To conclude with, both writers: Kureishi and Ali paint a colorful and panoramic portrait of the immigrant's experience in Britain. This portrait is framed by crisis of cultural identity and clash of cultures. Both of them tackle painstakingly the themes related to generations' gap on all the canvas of Britain in the 1970's and the early two thousands. Despite the fact that the historical context of both novels plays a crucial role in the making up of the novel's plots, the problematic issues of culture posed by both of them seem to be timeless and universal. As

¹²⁹ Ibid,p189.

¹³⁰ Ibid,p198

such, Kureishi and Ali tend to portray characters that have gone through a movement of displacement. These characters are meant to either choosing to be loyal to their original cultures or to open up to the host culture that is totally different from theirs.

The process of cultural (dis & re) location demanded physical displacement from their original homelands. Most of the characters in the novels dealt with, wanted to dislocate themselves from their original culture in order to be accepted in the culture of the host country. For instance, Karim of the Buddha of Suburbia embodies the major character of the novel. He resembles Chanu, one of the major characters of Brick Lane, in the sense that they both feel that their original culture and the way they look (i.e. brown skin and Bengali/Indian accent) prevents them from being accepted within the English culture and community.

On the other hand, the process of cultural relocation: to be relocated in the metropolitan city of London that once used to rule over them wasn't an easy one. By taking into consideration the dichotomy of East/West, Center/periphery, it becomes obvious that sense of superiority and inferiority are still present. Nonetheless, some characters such as Nazneen, Shahana and Bibi in *Brick Lane* as well as Jamila, and Haroon in *The Buddha of Suburbia* could manage to develop a hybrid persona that enabled them to co-exist in Britain.

Finally, Color prejudices, ethnic accents, clash of cultures along with religion intolerance shaped solid pillars upon which racism was built. Likely, most of the characters which represent South Asian diasporants suffered from being excluded and relegated to marginal spaces because of their inability to adopt the English culture on the one hand, and their physical appearance on the other. Finally, it is important to mention that the obstacles that they face when trying to culturally relocate themselves in Britain have a notable effect on space production. This latter is going to be studied in the coming chapter.

Chapter Three:

Production of Space in H. Kureishi's
The Buddha of Suburbia and M. Ali's
Brick Lane

Chapter Three: Production of space in H.Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* and M.Ali *Brick Lane*.

I-Introduction:

Moving from one place to another plays an important role in the construction of space. Movement and mobility, though appearing to have slight differences in meaning, they are interdependently connected categories. Contemporary British novels direct a notable attention to the issues of space, location and mobility within the process of understanding the characters' sensual experience of the city and its concrete bearings on their actions. Meanwhile, by taking into account the fact that the spatial structure of a text is tightly linked to general culture models of space and spatial relations (center-periphery) , it has also a notable effect on non-spatial relations i.e.: gender, class, race and ethnicity . In the course of the spatial turn, and with regard to diasporic population that are making shifts from their peripheral countries to central ones, the process of producing a space in the center became done through different stages and different places.

Both novels dealt with portray characters that are constantly undergoing displacement either from their peripheral lands to central ones like the case of Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*, or characters that are achieving shifts within metropolitan cities, but from suburban spaces to urban ones such as Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*. This chapter consists a study that aims at investigating the way characters produce different spaces in an attempt to cope with their changing places. Towards this end, many spaces have been examined in order to hint at the variety of possibilities that these characters have in the process of producing their spaces.

Furthermore, this chapter also highlights the effects of cultural backgrounds of individuals on the way they engage in their daily lives. This aspect of space is going to be studied on the light of Lefebvre's notion of "everydayness" or "quotidienneté" that deals with the drawbacks of modernity on the life of individuals as well as the effects of capitalism on rendering the modern life meaningless and characterized by alienation and absurdity.

III.1.Production of a Suburban Space

In order to understand how the suburban space is produced by different characters in the novels dealt with, we have to examine how this space has been represented in English literature.

III.1.1Representation of suburbia and suburban space in English literature

Suburbia¹³¹ has been usually represented in English literature mostly in a negative way. As the suburbs grew and multiplied, British writers had used suburbs as both a setting and a subject. As such, Suburbia became closely linked to public consciousness, the working class and more often to the lower middle class. This negative portrayal of suburbia as being problematic made the suburban space a center of paralysis and restriction. Furthermore, British novelists tend to equate suburbia with "a central place in the explanation of the twentieth century experience"¹³².

Head finds that the post-war British engagement with suburbia appeared with stereotypical depiction of suburban life as being "deadening, unimaginative and representative

¹³¹ Suburbia is defined by Ruth Mc Manus and Phillip.J. Gthingtore as : peripheral location (at least initially, the suburb is located at the edge of urban core, functional dependence, sometimes with political independence. Relationship to the countryside (particularly in the 19th century, suburbanization was linked to the Romantic Picturesque Movement and aspirations of country living); Housing Type(Most commonly single family dwellings with gardens; social(class,race,ethnic).

¹³² Head, Dominic. *The Cambridge Introduction to Modern British Fiction,1955-2000*. Cambridge University Press, 2002.p214

of a low or a restricted common denunciation”¹³³. In the same respect, Simon Goulding notes that: “the role of the suburbs in English fiction is usually that of a pejorative space”¹³⁴. Moreover, Roger Silverstone suggests that suburbia is a key element that helps to understand the contemporary culture because suburbia, according to him, is an integral part of figuring out the everyday life in contemporary industrialized societies.¹³⁵

Indeed, in the novels dealt with, *The Buddha of Suburbia* and *Brick Lane* there exist characters that grew and spent most of their lives in the suburbs, dealing with marginality and limitation. In Hanif Kureishi’s *the Buddha of Suburbia*, the emphasis on the suburban space is clearly shown. . He divides his novel into two sections entitled “in the suburbs” and “in the city” building as such, a binary situation that tends to privilege the city as a more authentic site of culture.

III.1.1 “The Suburbs” as a space in *The Buddha of Suburbia*

In her book about an analysis of Hanif Kureishi’s novel *The Buddha of Suburbia*, the suburb¹³⁶ is represented as: “the often demonized other of the city life: safe where the city is dangerous, mutinous and enervating where the city is diverse and stimulating, the site of heterosexual family life where the city opens up the potential for sexual experimentation and possibility”¹³⁷. Brook tends to criticize the way critics look at suburbia. She emphasizes on the shallow engagement with suburbia by British critics. In the same regard, she argues that

¹³³ Ibid, p218.

¹³⁴ Goulding, Simon. « The Sound of the Suburbs: Orwell Bowling and the Estates in Coming up to Air.» *Literary London: Interdisciplinary Studies in The Representation of London* 71 (2009).

¹³⁵ Silverstone, Roger. *Visions of Suburbia*. Routledge, 1997.

¹³⁶ A distinction needs to be made between the term ‘suburbia’ and ‘suburb’ Mcmanus and Ethington, “the noun ‘suburb’ is the denotative, or objective location and built form[however] the culturally connotative noun ‘suburbia’ [...] refers to the way of life of the people living in the suburbs, portrayed as an identifiable group, community or class in society. Suburbanities.” To put it differently the term suburbia indicates a state of mind or a mode of life.

¹³⁷ Brook, Susan. *Hedgemony? Suburban Space in The Buddha of Suburbia: British Fiction of the 1990s*. London: Routledge, 2005.p290

critics of suburban space tend to mistakenly act as if: “there were no distinctions between different kinds of suburbs”¹³⁸. The binary opposition that exists between the city and the suburbs is because of the ambiguity of the suburbs as an idea as well as regarding it the ultimate other of the city.

Moreover, Tim Rowse in his essay: “*Heaven and Hill Hoist: Australian Critics on Suburbia*”, states that suburbia is: “a part of a wider intellectual culture common to Britain and North America. Among social critics of these countries, suburbia, suburban and suburb have been used to describe a certain form of social life which emerged in the metropolis of Europe”¹³⁹. The emergence of Suburbia in England dates back to the dawn of the 18th century, a time during which England had witnessed a rapid migration from the rural places to the industrialization cities. However, in the meantime, many new rich British who belonged to the middle class took different direction: setting in the suburbs and purchasing estates on the outskirts of London. This trend of opposite migration was accelerated in the 19th century, in cities such as London and Manchester. Many people at that time wanted to escape the squalid conditions of industrial zones. In addition, by the end of the century with progress achieved in public transit systems like the underground rail ways and buses which had facilitated movement and aided the city’s population who reside outside the city to commute into the center of work easily.

Nonetheless the representation of suburbia in the English literature has been the subject of a heated debate. One of the critics who took in charge discussing the wide spread of the suburban space as a setting amongst the British writing is Dominic Head. In his book “The Cambridge introduction to modern British Fiction, 1950-2000, he states that “the dramatic spread of suburbia” and its notable influence on the literary production has always contributed

¹³⁸ ibid

¹³⁹ Rowse, Tim. «Heaven and a Hill Hoist: Australian Critics on Suburbia.» 37 (1978).

to its negative representation. In the same respect, he suggests that: “in the popular imagination, suburbia is Middle England. It is preoccupied with shopping and cars; it breeds narrow attitudes, and wears naff styles; and is mystified by artistic Endeavour.”¹⁴⁰

Since the opening lines of the novel, the suburbs are often portrayed as a dull, rigid and consumerist. Philip Whyte reads Karim’s suburban environment as “mediocre lower-middleclass”¹⁴¹ Even the characters depicted in the novel are subject of boredom and despair because of the life in the suburbs. Karim’s mother, for instance, a typical white English woman, is portrayed as the epitome of the suburban housewife that is always bored, depressed and neglected. Even though, Margret works in a shoe store, she is frequently depicted at home engaged with housework, watching television for hours, wearing: “an apron with flowers in it”¹⁴² and repetitively “wiping her hand on a tea towel”¹⁴³. Karim states in the novel that his parents would never think of divorce because: “in the suburbs people rarely dreamt of striking out for happiness. It was all familiarity and endurance: security and safety were the reward of dullness”¹⁴⁴ She subdues herself to all her family members, which cause her to feel oppressed and exhausted. She escapes from the pressures of the suburban lifestyle by drawing pictures and writing in her diary. However, Haroon, Karim’s father, walks daily to the railway station to a boring job in the city only to come back home to his indifferent wife and children .

In this regard Peter Childs argues that Haroon conforms to: “the stereotypical image of the community civil servant whose suburban boredom has to be enlivened by exoticism

¹⁴⁰Head, Dominic. *The Cambridge Introduction to Modern British Fiction, 1955-2000*. Cambridge University Press, 2002.p213

¹⁴¹ Whyte, Phillip. *Epic Realism and the Western Canon in Hanif Kureishi's Buddha of Suburbia*. 2000.p153

¹⁴² Kureishi, Hanif. *The Buddha of Suburbia*. London: Penguin Books, 1991.p 4.

¹⁴³ Ibid

¹⁴⁴ Ibid,p8

and extra material sex”¹⁴⁵. Haroon, an immigrant who came from Pakistan, has lived in the suburbs of South London for fifteen years and adopted suburban way of life. Nonetheless Haroon is unsatisfied with his suburban lifestyle. Annabelle Cone claims that Haroon as Hanif Kureishi represent him: “years to overcome [...] a loneliness derived from his inability to find happiness as an Indian Immigrant in an English middle class, postwar, suburban materialist culture”¹⁴⁶. Karim, despite being a young man, he could notice his father’s dissatisfaction of his way of life and wonders why his father: “condemned his own son to a dreary suburb of London”¹⁴⁷.

Nevertheless, despite Karim relates boredom and depression to suburbia, he realizes that his social environment and where he lives are not all what to blame. He points out that it might be his mixed race and ethnic background that cause him such boredom: “Perhaps it is the odd mixture of continents and blood, of here and there, of belonging and not, that makes me restless and easily bored”¹⁴⁸. Furthermore, he finds out that his boredom might also be the result of lack of excitement as he says: “I was always looking for trouble, any kind of movement, action or sexual interest I could find, because things were so gloomy, so slow and so heavy in our family”¹⁴⁹.

Thus, Karim as a suburban teenager is bored because of the absence of excitement which he relates to his family. One might interpret this as the result of his parents’ choice of living in the suburbs. Thus, Kureishi sticks to the traditional depiction of the suburbs by

¹⁴⁵Peter, Childs. «Suburban Values and Ethni-cities in Indo-Anglian Writing.» Webster, Roger. *Expanding Suburbia: Reviewing Suburban Narratives*. New York: Berghahn, 2000. p103

¹⁴⁶ Cone, Annabelle. *The Politics of Intimacy in Hanif Kureishi's Films and Fiction*. 2004.p262

¹⁴⁷ Kureishi, Hanif. *The Buddha of Suburbia*. London: Penguin Books, 1991.p23.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid,p03.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid

portraying it as a site to be escaped and run from towards a more open space for opportunities in the city where freedom and excitement are found.

This view is confirmed by Barry Langford who suggests that Kureish's novel is an extension to: "a long tradition depicting the suburban life as unfreedom and dissimulation, a picture easily depicted across innumerable treatments of suburbia"¹⁵⁰. In the same token, Childs argues that South Asian writing often depicts "Suburbia... as a place to be escaped"¹⁵¹. Hanif Kureishi himself comments on his up-bringing in Bromly saying that: "being a suburban boy, I have never lost the romance of London. The idea of coming to London and it has always been exciting and it has always been dull in the suburbs"¹⁵². Furthermore, Karim, resembling to some extent the character of Hanif Kureishi himself, has always dreamt of leaving the suburbs which he considers marginal in relation to the central city of London. In the third page of the novel, Karim states that: "I always wanted to be somewhere else"¹⁵³. He urges for a sentiment of displacement, of moving himself from the suburban space which he considers a space of limitation. Later on, Karim says that: "it would be years before I could get away to the city, London, where life would be bottomless in its temptations"¹⁵⁴.

Thus, according to how Karim perceives the city, one can deduce that Karim draws a bold line between the city and the suburbs, leaning on the side of the urban life. He equates the city to excitement, endless chances and a gateway to fulfill his dreams whereas he links negative connotations to the suburbs as being dull, empty, rigid, racist and filled with low expectations.

¹⁵⁰ Langford, Barry. « Margins of the City :Towards a Dialectic of Suburban Desire.» Richard Phillips, Diane Watt, David Shelton. *Politics and Representations Beyond the Metropolis*. London: Routledge, 2000. 64-80.

¹⁵¹ *ibid*

¹⁵² Yosaf, Nahem. *The Buddha of Suburbia: A Reader's Guide*. New York: Continuum, 2002.

¹⁵³ Kureishi, Hanif. *The Buddha of Suburbia*. London: Penguin Books, 1991.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p107.

In spite of the fact that Karim is unable to move out from the suburbs towards London until the book reaches its middle, he is being constantly reminded of his dream by his surroundings who inspire him to follow his dream. Karim says that: “it did me good to be reminded of how much I loathed the suburbs and that I had to continue my journey to London and a new life, ensuring got away from people and streets like this”¹⁵⁵. Indeed, Childs notes that it’s nearly all English novels that are set in the suburbs tend to hold plots driven by: “fears of incorporation, stagnation, and resignation” that “turn on the yearning of one or more characters to flee to the city”. Likely, Kureishi in his novel, *The Buddha of Suburbia* tends to provide many characters that have the urge to flee the suburbs, among which, Karim, Charlie and Eva.

Furthermore, Suburbia has been long considered to be detached and distant from the multicultural city of London. It’s presented as a diasporic in-between space. Indeed as Billy Brag describes Suburbia: “For me, suburbia is a kind of neither place. It’s not urban and it’s not rural. It’s between the two, and the kind of people from middle England. People with middle inspirations”. As a landscape, suburbia is perceived as a place of green and leafy streets that contain spotless houses in which people lead typical lives characterized by simplicity that makes it a safe space.

III.1.2. Conceptualization of space in Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane*

However, Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane* the presentation of suburbia and the suburban space takes a different orientation. The novel takes its title from a street in East London located in the London Borough of tower hamlets. It is all dominated by Bangladeshi immigrants and characterized by poor housing as it is the case with most areas that contain ethnic minorities. Looking back at the life of Nazneen in her hometown Dhaka which was a

¹⁵⁵ Ibid

suburban small village where she dwelled with her family, readers notice that Nazneen had little control over her life. She was not allowed to decide or to choose. All she was permitted to do is to obey and be submissive to whatever decisions her father makes and judges to be good for her.

Nazneen had the principles of every suburban girl. She was a faithful person and believed in the power of destiny and that it cannot be challenged or changed; it can only be borne. She actually let this belief control the ongoing of her life. When her father decides to marry her off to a man she does not know she agrees instantly. This is described in the passage where her father was about to show her a picture of her husband, without even looking at it, she passively submitted to what her father sees suitable for her, in her words: “Abba, it is good that you have chosen my husband, I hope I can be a good wife like Amma”¹⁵⁶ Nevertheless, when she stole a glimpse of the picture of her supposedly future husband, she was disgusted because he looked like a “frog”¹⁵⁷. This scene that took place in a small village, confirms to a great extent the impact of the suburban space on the characters and the way they lead their lives. Likewise, this also emphasizes on the fact that Ali has followed a long tradition of representing suburbia as a dull, redundant place that is invaded by senses of negativity, helplessness and stagnation.

III.1.3. Apprehending suburbia as a gendered space

Both gender and space when discussing them in the widest sense, as far as society is concerned, consist abstract concepts that reflect power relations, gendered classification of labor as well as societal concepts of propriety. A suitable example here is juxtaposing the boardrooms of banks and small town’s kitchens. The first one holds and encloses more power

¹⁵⁶ Ali, Monica. *Brick Lane*. London: Simon and Schuster, 2008.

¹⁵⁷ *ibid*

than the second one. In addition, the abstract image of boardrooms of banks is often linked to men while kitchens are likely associated with women. This is due to the fact that each one of these spaces entails certain activities that are attributed either to men or women. The way these activities are distributed has a lot to do with society, tradition and religion.

Gendered space is the intersection of knowledge and action in the gender realm that is political, ideological and embedded in the existing code of production.¹⁵⁸ Lefebvre's significant features of space are either political, ideological and included within the code of space production. He suggests that not only did socialism create gendered space, but these spaces that are manipulated by states and individuals are made in order to rewrite their public roles. The urge to divide spaces into male and female ones is widely connected to the roles and actions that take place in these spaces. In order to conceptualize the notion of gendered space, Lefebvre's views are of a great importance here. He believes that space is inherently political entity that is tightly linked to hegemony and power.¹⁵⁹ He suggests that space can be classified within both physical and mental categories and it is deeply rooted in the existing mode of its production.

Despite the fact that Lefebvre is deeply influenced by Marxism and Marxist ideologies in understanding space, he also draws upon Foucauldian apprehension of space. For Foucault, it becomes viewed not only as "a means of production" but also "a means of control."¹⁶⁰ Nevertheless, even though Lefebvrian conception of space tends to be similar to the one given by Foucault in the sense that they both agree on space being a locus of hegemony that is "exercised over society as a whole, culture and knowledge included, and generally via human mediation: policies and political leaders, parties as also a good many intellectuals such as

¹⁵⁸ Lefebvre, Henry. *The Production of Space*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991.

¹⁵⁹ *ibid*

¹⁶⁰ Lefebvre, Henry. *The Production of Space*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991.p26

experts”¹⁶¹, they tend to disagree on the definition of power. While Foucault believes that power is embedded in force (bio-power), Lefebvre finds it more likely to be linked to politics. He suggests: “it is sovereign and conceived from above”¹⁶². Indeed, the characteristics of space according to Lefebvre contain its representation of the political side as a form of hegemony and power that dictates its production.

After conceptualizing space, a closer look at the meaning of gender is needed. Gal and Klignam conceive gender as mainly an ideology that investigates the meaning and the implication of being a man or a woman in a given society and how the state institutionalize it. In this respect, they suggest that: “gender is socially and culturally produced ideas about male-female differences, power and inequality that structure the reproduction of these differences in the institutionalized politics of society”¹⁶³. Likewise, both novels dealt with show signs of sexist discrimination that ranks suburbia as gendered space.

In her novel *Brick Lane*, Monica Ali tends to represent the life of women in suburban space, portraying their conflicts and struggle of ideology as well as belonging. In her essay “*Where I come from*”, Ali explained her inspiration to write her novel claiming that:

“My experience, for instance, of conflict between first and second generation immigrants, the stories that my father used to tell me about village life. A book of case studies about Bangladeshi women garment workers in Dhaka and East End London, desperate lives drawn together by the common goal of self-employment”¹⁶⁴.

¹⁶¹ Shields, Rob. *Lefebvre, Love and Struggle: Spatial Dialectics*. New York: Routledge, 1999.p156

¹⁶² *ibid*

¹⁶³ Gal S., Kligman G. *The Politics of Gender after Socialism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.p4

¹⁶⁴ <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2003/jun/17/artsfeatures.fiction>. accessed on 14-12-2016

The presence of the suburban lifestyle is noticeable in *Brick Lane*. Nazneen is the epitome of the simple suburban girl that is faithfully connected to her roots and acts according to traditions and religion. Her life is devoted to her husband and daughters and never really considered to change herself or leave the Bangladeshi community until the end of the novel.

Moreover, Ali highlights the fact that the suburban state of mind is what renders suburbia a gendered space where women strive for equality with their male counterparts. In addition, Even though the characters portrayed in the novel made shifts from their peripheral villages to central city of London (even though the outskirts only), they brought their traditions and way of thinking with them. As Chanu states: “they don’t ever really leave home. Their bodies are here but their hearts are back there. And anyway, look how they live: just recreating the villages here.”¹⁶⁵ Chanu stresses on the reason why they tend to recreate their villages with its suburban atmosphere. This leaves the readers the impression that they will encounter more characteristics of rural culture that places men above women and limit their spatial freedom and mobility. It is legitimate, in this case, to claim that women in suburbs are deprived from accessing public spaces or the ones that are “by tradition” specific for men such as work. This is actually illustrated in the events of the novel through which Ali portrays female characters that are denied access to public spaces, when Razia complains to Nazneen that her husband prevents her from working she says:

“He works all day and night. He keeps me locked up inside. If I get a job, he will kill me. He will kill me kindly, just one slit across her. That’s the sort of man he is. For hours, for days, he says nothing at all, and when he speaks that’s the kind of talk I get [...] Jorina can get me a sewing job but my husband will come to the factory and slaughter me like a lamb”¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵ Ali, Monica. *Brick Lane*. London: Simon and Schuster, 2008.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid,p6

Razia has described what she expects to happen if she dares to ask her husband's permission to get a job. This scene takes us to the beginning of the novel when Hasina eloped with her lover. The narrator states that: "Hamid ground his teeth and axe besides [...] cursing his whore-pig daughter whose head would be served the moment she came crawling back"¹⁶⁷. Hamid's reaction resembles so much the reaction of Razia's husband that she tends to imagine. The only difference is that Hasina was likened to an owl which is a symbol of a wicked person whereas Razia is compared to a lamb, a symbol of a poor and helpless woman. However different they may seem, both of them are attributed to traditional connotations that are mostly found in the suburbs.

Furthermore, Kureishi also tends to share similar orientations with Ali concerning the definition of suburbia as a gendered space. Most female characters in the novel are shown in "the places where they should be". Women seem to deal with depression in their suburban households. Kureishi tends to use the adjective "suburban" with Margret, Karim's mother to link her status as being rigid, naïve to her dwelling in the suburbs. In one passage that describes how naïve and bored she is, the narrator Karim portrays to the reader the kind of talks that usually takes place between his mother and father and how she responds:

"Anwar raised his eyes to heaven and looked at Mum, who sat there, bored. They both had sympathy for Dad and loved him, but in these moods love was always mixed with pity, as if he were making some tragic mistake like jining the Jehovah's witnesses. The more he talked of the Yin and Yang , cosmic consciousness, Chinese philosophy, and following of the Way, the more lost Mum became. He seemed to be drifting away into outer space, leaving her behind; she was a suburban woman quiet and kind and found life with two children and Dad difficult enough as it was"¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, p7

¹⁶⁸ Kureishi, Hanif. *The Buddha of Suburbia*. London: Penguin Books, 1991.

Hanif's portrayal of Karim's mother's inability to understand what her husband is saying, hinting at the fact that taking care of her husband and two sons is already difficult for her. The status of Karim's mother is similar to other suburban women who experience a sense of autonomy in control of consumption of the household. Even freedom is differently experienced, women in the suburbs are likely pictured as nurturers of the family, enjoying their cozy comforting kitchens while men are pictured as earners of living and often busy at work. Indeed, Margaret is the female character in the novel that exemplifies this category of women. She is often portrayed in the kitchen, bored, and rigid. Whenever the narrator, Karim, mentions his mother, she is cooking, serving or watching television.

III.2.Domestic space: A space of appropriation and empowerment

Among the dominant spaces in the novels dealt with is the domestic space. For Lefebvre, the domestic space is unique; he tends to depoliticize and dehistoricize it since he conceives it as an "appropriated space". He presents it as a space of resistance and emancipation that challenges the dictate of state. He also perceives the domestic space as independent and immune to the power imbalances and the oppressive social relations operative in the space outside home. Lefebvre, furthermore, relates the domestic space with nature, interiority as well as enclosure. Indeed, Hanif Kureishi describes how suburban populations perceive their domestic space:

"There is a refusal to admit humanity beyond the family, beyond the household walls and garden fence each family is an autonomous self-sufficient unit faces hostile world of other self-contained families this neurotic and materialistic privacy, the key stone of British suburban life, ensures that the collective for even the public will mean little to these people." ¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁹ Kureishi, « Some Time with Stephen »,p101.

Domestic space, thus, is conceived not only as a form of shelter and escape but also acts as an arena that allows individuals to express their identities free from the limitations imposed by the outside space. It is privacy and intimacy that renders the domestic space safe and homogeneous. likely, what Hanif Kureishi sought to highlight through his novel is to provide readers with blurring views between private and public spaces, paving the way to another one to emerge, this space could be termed “queer space”¹⁷⁰ It’s clear that suburban space has been long perceived to be neutral and a non-sexual public space. Nevertheless, critic David Bell believes that public space tends to embrace some heterosexual coupledness as seeing couples sitting in public banks and so on, but when it comes to homosexual or lesbian relationships, spaces are more to be privatized and contained within a domestic space. Recently queer activism tried to appropriate the public one by their attempts to sexualize it, a space where non-heterosexual behavior tends to be banned and condemned as an explicit sexual performance.

Thus, Hanif Kureishi, through portraying sexual scenes that take place in public, tends to disrupt the blurring line between the public and the private spaces. Most sex scenes take place between public and private ones. Karim is surprised when he encounters his father Haroon having an affair with Eva on the garden bench outside the place where the party took place. The garden in here consists a liminal space that is neither public nor private. Furthermore, what Kureishi tends to present, is the role of the architecture of the suburbs in blurring the line between private and public space through the doors, windows and even buildings and houses.

¹⁷⁰ Queer space is the one characterized by tolerance for difference and acceptance of one’s divergence from social norms that are determined by gender. It is not physical space but rather an abstract one. Moreover, it is considered as a peripheral space and occupied by subjects that align themselves against the mainstream narrative of normative heterosexuality. It is seen peripheral because of the politics of power. According to Lefebvre, social spaces are not only products but also means of control. Those who produce queer spaces are segregated minorities that are not welcomed among public spaces usually.

In one scene, Karim's mother asks him to pull the curtains so the neighbors cannot see his half naked father practicing his Yoga but Karim answers her : “ it's not necessary, mum, there isn't another house that can see us for a hundred yards unless they are watching through binoculars”¹⁷¹ and she answers him back saying: “ that's exactly what they are doing”¹⁷² Thus , one can understand that in the suburban space , the private one is under constant attempts to be turned into a public space. Moreover, most of the shifts between spaces are either made among the suburbs or from suburban space to urban one. A suitable example about moving inside the suburban space is Karim's father Haroon who travels daily to work and back between Buckingham and Whitehall. For the one concerned with movement from the suburban space to the one of the city, is Karim's journey from Buckingham to the west Kingston where his upper-class girlfriend lives.

In an attempt to better understand the domestic space and achieving a clear understanding to make the difference between the public and private or domestic space apparent, Lefebvre's theory of production of space is of a remarkable importance here. For Lefebvre, space can only be grasped if the unity between the three fields of space: physical, mental and social one is understood. He believes that the combination of the three results in the production of space that is abstract i.e.: a space that can be applied to denote the characteristics of things, experiences and phenomena. He says that spaces are considered: “ mere abstractions [that] attain real existence by virtue of networks and pathways, by virtue of bunches or clusters of relationships”¹⁷³ Henceforth, how characters produce their spaces whether public or private depends on their experiences and the feeling they get from being in a certain space.

¹⁷¹ Kureishi, Hanif. *The Buddha of Suburbia*. London: Penguin Books, 1991.p4

¹⁷² ibid

¹⁷³ lefebvre, Henry. *The Production of Space*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991.p88.

In Monica Ali's novel *Brick Lane*, it becomes evident that her protagonist character "Nazneen" is limiting herself in her domestic space which is in her case: a typical flat where she lives. Nazneen is a simple woman who immigrates to London, a Muslim wife who is appeased with traditional thoughts that define her Bangladeshi identity. Being in a completely new environment against which her traditions are, she is partially marginalized and relegated to liminal space, a space where she finds relief. Nazneen seem to be involved in her domestic space that is her flat located in the Tower Hamlet shapes a constricted site in which the outside space occurs through Chanu's continuous debates about the purported superiority of the British and how they look down at the Bangladeshi community. However, Chanu fails in attracting Nazneen's attention towards issues related to the outside space because of her diasporic subjectivity which is firmly rooted in her domesticity that makes her feel safe. Even Chanu, seem to be more drawn to the domestic space because it is the only one where he is not being othered.

Nevertheless, the fact of being different prevents her from accessing the public space (because of being Bangladeshi and a Muslim " woman") puts her under pressures that may hinder her accessibility to the public space where she could establish a set of social relationships with the external world. The following quotation sheds light on how women are denied access to public either due to their gender or religion:

"The fact is that substantial members of young Muslim women are virtually enslaved in Britain, they grew up in what can only be called a totalitarian environment. I know this from what my parents have told me. They are not allowed out of the house except under escort, and sometimes not even; they are allowed to mail or use of the telephone; they are not allowed to contradict a male member of the household, and are automatically subject to his wishes; it is regarded as quite legitimate to beat them if they disobey in the slightest. Their brothers are often quite willing to attack anyone who speaks to the women in any informal context. They are faced to wear modes of dress that they do not wish to wear. Their schooling is quite often deliberately interrupted so that they are not infected by Western ideas of personal liberty.

Ambitious for a career, they are kept at home as prisoners and domestic slaves.”¹⁷⁴

The quote above contains real information that describes how Bangladeshi women are treated. The fact of being a woman in the Bangladeshi culture defines them as subordinate and helpless in front of their male counterparts. In fact, this process of patriarchy plays a great role in women's alienation and choice to contain themselves in a space of their own. A space of marginality, liminality and above all a private one in which they could be free in their thoughts, dressing and behavior.

Nazneen for example, in the early stages of the novel is presented as a passive and dutiful suburban girl who is limited by culture. She is subordinate to men in her life but with different shapes and different degrees. She grows up in Bangladesh, leading a typical suburban life where women are supposed to be good, obedient and submissive. She is obedient to her father when he decides to send her away with Chanu who controls her and in some parts in the novel she is depicted as submissive to her lover Karim. Furthermore, what denies her from the public space at first was her ignorance of the language.

She could not speak English and all she knew about it was how to say thank you and sorry. She engages in her daily life as a typical wife who does the same housework, cleaning and cooking. This has made her more and more connected to her domestic space. This may be due to the fact that her domestic space is the only spot where she could be what she hopes to be, without being a subject to the clear division imposed by culture: confining feminine/domestic space and liberating masculine/ public space. Nazneen is clearly deeply bound up with domesticity and maternity. This, actually, makes any attempt to conquer the public space a rebellious step to take part in a space that is hierarchally owned by men.

¹⁷⁴ Dabrymple, Theodore. «Wrong from Head to Toe.» (2005).

Monica Ali through her portrayal of Nazneen tends to challenge the existing idea of domestic space as a harmonious, safe and maternal heaven. She portrays “the home” as an imbalanced space where there sexist differences in power and gender, instead of picturing a romantic and stereotypical view of home. Nevertheless, Nazneen tends to open up and start producing a space based on her liberation and self realization.

III.3.The work space: Seeking a spatial justice

Aside from Ali’s portrayal of *Brick Lane*’s main character, Nazneen, as marginalized in her domestic landscape of her cramped flat where she lives with her husband and two daughters, she also shows how a domestic space that is a site of marginalization and alienation can be turned into a space of empowerment. This is manifested when Nazneen turns it into a work space, where she takes in charge piece work for a local garment sweatshop. Ali’s novel also sheds light on how a private domestic space is used as a major site of globalization where goods are being produced by women workers for external corporations. Nazneen produces her own space of empowerment through having a job. To contextualize Nazneen’s work at home, we have to look into the conditions that led her to step forward and make this decision.

After her husband lost his job, she found no way but to start working and earning money to support her family. In fact, Nazneen is the epitome of immigrant Bangladeshi women who are living in a multicultural space. Most of women occupy marginal spaces and have subjugated positions. Nazneen does not represent herself only, but rather she symbolizes all immigrant women from different countries especially asylum seekers. Through her portrayal, Ali highlights the poor conditions that immigrant women suffer from. Most of them

occupy low paid jobs and they are seen as silent laborers because they accept cheap labor not to mention the illegal workers whose wages are dramatically low.

Just like her neighbor Razia, Nazneen remained at home for years. Nevertheless, they finally get out of their cocoons because of work. Nazneen starts working due to the financial decadence that her family suffers from, and Razia after her husband died. Both of them portray the status of Bangladeshi working women who live in a multicultural space. Indeed, being an immigrant worker in a multicultural space can be tough to endure especially for women. Razia works in a sewing factory and finds a job for Nazneen to work at home but readers are informed that this factory is closed. Razia's words might provide a legitimate explanation from an immigrant point of view:

“These bloody health inspectors, said Razia ‘closed the bloody factory down , came with an interpreter and went around asking stupid questions , Is it always hot in here?’ I told them, “No. In winter you have to take a chisel and knock off the ice between your toes” they say are closing the factory for health and safety but everyone thinks it is something else. The people who came from immigration.”¹⁷⁵

Razia's speech tells a lot about the sufferance of immigrant workers generally in the garment factory. In fact this garment factory as a space can be perceived as a space of injustice. It's crystal clear from Razia's description of the work space, that it lacks respectful standards of any other legitimate work place. We can understand that they do not even have air conditioning, they suffer from the heat in summer and coldness in winter and it is also apparent they are not paid.

¹⁷⁵ Ali, Monica. *Brick Lane*. London: Simon and Schuster, 2008.

This will lead to Edward Soja's understanding of spatial justice which is presented through his focus on: "the reintroduction of space into a social and political thought"¹⁷⁶ through which he directs a notable attention to the importance of space in constructing and conditioning the human life by using society as a lens through which to interpret the contemporary politics. Spatial justice for him tends to describe justice struggles that have to do with the relationship between the use and design of certain spaces and how they are determined. Indeed, the design of the work space "the garment" shows the extent to which the immigrant workers are deprived from their rights. It turns the work place from a space of empowerment and self resilience into a space of subordination, abduction and injustice. Immigrant women take the lion's share from this injustice. First, they are subdued by their male counterparts, and second, they are being used and abused by the poor conditions of work. Nazneen for example stands for all the other immigrant women whose voices are never heard. Women that occupy domestic space that is also "a work space" .Ali in an interview made with David Boratav states that:

"I talked to people at a women's center or a big housing project. They were setting up home working initiatives and finding ways of keeping their earnings secret from their husbands"¹⁷⁷

Indeed this is portrayed in the novel a when Nazneen tends to keep things from her husband: "Chanu would not know how many lining she had sewn or how many jackets she had buttonholed. He would know how much money there should be"¹⁷⁸. By drawing a parallel

¹⁷⁶ Soja, Edward. *Seeking Spatial Justice*. University of Minnesota Press, 2010.p6

¹⁷⁷ Ibid

¹⁷⁸ Ali, Monica. *Brick Lane*. London: Simon and Schuster, 2008.p150

line between what Ali has stated in an interview and the vivid portrayal in her novel, particularly the quote mentioned above, we understand that women are occupying a gendered domestic space in which they are controlled by their male counterparts. This is due to the cultural implications of the Bangladeshi culture that praises men and places them in a superior position over women. The same culture that these immigrants fled their homelands to escape. As Rajan Park puts it :

“Immigrant women, trapped between the patriarchal families and communities on the one hand , and the racist state on the other , are particularly susceptible to family violence. As workers we saw that they are vulnerable to exploitation either as undocumented aliens in illegal production sites or as employees in low paying labor”¹⁷⁹

From the quote above the status of women is the same whether in their home lands or in the new centric cities that they have moved to. Even though they have achieved a shift from their peripheral cities and culture that they find as oppressive, they still encounter the same oppressions in their newly established homes. In fact, this is one of the shortcomings of multicultural spaces because they serve as extensive spaces of oppression to the diaspora since it celebrates and embraces the practices of different cultures which may be oppressive.

However, in Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*, there are women, such as Jamila, that are presented as powerful and skillfully playing the roles that are assigned to them. She is represented in the novel as the epitome of brave woman that refuses to bow down to traditions. She often has conflicts with her father because he tries to controls her life and marry her off to Changez , a man she does not like, but finally she fulfils her father's wish and marries him after her father went on strike and stopped eating, using it as a tool to force her to obey him.

¹⁷⁹ Henry Schwarz, Sangeeta Ray. *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies*. John Wiley & Sons, 2008.p60

III.4. longing for the city: Production of an urban space

The Buddha of Suburbia portrays characters that are living in the suburbs of London but not satisfied with it. Karim, as one of these characters, feel limited and confined by the life in the suburbs. Furthermore, Karim presents the suburbs as a place to be abandoned; he also considers it as a point of departure: “a leaving place, the start of a life”¹⁸⁰. However, even though the book is divided into two sections: the suburbs and the city, Karim is never portrayed as setting permanently in any one of them. He wanders in different houses holding: “[his] life equipment in a big canvas bag”¹⁸¹. Karim’s longing the city space might be attributed to his search for freedom from all the constraints imposed on him as a mixed race person on the one hand and his parents’ high expectations from him on the other. For instance, in the last pages of the novel, when Karim went on a trip organized by his theatre’s company in the United States precisely New York, an event that he eagerly waited for. His eagerness for displacement and movement pushed him to stay in New York and refuse to get back with rest of the crew. He says:

”when the others went back to London, I ripped up my ticket and stayed in New York. There was nothing for me to do in London and my aimlessness would be eyeballed by my father, who would use it as an evidence that I should become a doctor; or , at least, that I should visit a doctor. In New York I could be walking stagnantly without restraint”¹⁸²

As this passage shows, Karim’s displacement and willingness to leave the suburbs and settle down in the city is due to his account of himself as a : “a walking stagnancy”¹⁸³. The way he

¹⁸⁰ Kureishi, Hanif. *The Buddha of Suburbia*. London: Penguin Books, 1991.p117

¹⁸¹ Ibid,p94

¹⁸² Ibid,p249

¹⁸³ Ibid

perceives himself is shared by his father who interpreters his son's wandering as aimlessness and failure to progress (to become a doctor). Nevertheless, in spite of Karim's determination to never get back to London, he soon feels homesick and decides to get back permanently: "I was glad to be doing it: I missed my parents and Eva"¹⁸⁴. In fact Karim's decision to return "home" was not because of boredom or getting enough from the big city life. Contrarily, it is the size of the city along with its extravagance that seem overwhelming to him. Being located in an urban space that is characterized by modernity and permissive metropolitan attitudes caused him to feel very "suburban". This can be illustrated in the passage where he was invited to watch "an experimental bondage session" between his friend Charlie (who became a very famous "rock star" in New York) and Frankie "a prostitute". Karim felt shocked and could not hide his surprise:

- "It is odd" there and then I cleared my throat

- "Are you sure you want me here and everything?"

- "Why Not?" said Frankie, looking at me over her shoulder.

- "What d'you mean?"

- "Are you sure you want spectators at this thing?" It's only sex, she [Frankie] said. "He's not having an operation".

- "Oh yes, ok, but"

- "Sit down, Karim, for God's sake", said Charlie "stop farting about it, you are not in Buckingham now"

- "I know that"

- "Well then, can't you stop standing there and look so English?"

- "What do you mean English?"

- "So shocked, so self-righteous and immoral, so loveless and incapable of dancing. They are narrow, the English. It is a kingdom of prejudice over there. Don't be like it!"¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁴Ibid

¹⁸⁵ Ibid,p253-4

It is only then, when Karim realizes that he does not belong to such a space. This passage illustrates the effects of living in an urban space on the (re) construction of one's identity and culture. In fact, this further illustrates Lefebvre's views of the transformation of space as a landscape into a property of values exchange. As Ross suggests:

“Lefebvre is at forefront of a new image of society as a city and thus beginning of a whole new thematic of inside and outside, of inclusion in and exclusion from a positively valued modernity. Cities possess a center and banlieues, with citizens, those on the interior, deciding who among the insiders should be expelled and whether or not to open their doors to those on the outside”¹⁸⁶

In this respect, with regard to Karim's encounter with the city and its vast space, it becomes evident that this latter is characterized by being diverse and strongly affected by modernity. Schulz agrees with Lefebvre in defining the city space. He suggests that the city represents a collective dwelling, a meeting place in which people congregate and exchange values, ideas, feelings and concerns. He claims that the significance of the city as a space lays in the fact that it allows groups of people to meet in spite of their differences. Schulz names this space as “milieu of possibilities”¹⁸⁷ due to the multiplicity of choices available. Thus one's ability to cope with an urban space is determined by the extent to which they can adopt its values. Karim, earlier in the novel, had recurring dreams about leaving the suburbs and its dull atmosphere. In one passage he tends to describe his fascination by London, he says:

“In bed, before I went to sleep I fantasized about London and what I do there when the city belonged to me. There is Hyde Park playing Bingos with their hands; there was also the keyboard one the doors light my fire. There were kids dressed in velvet Chucks who lived free lives; there were thousands of black people everywhere, so I couldn't feel exposed; there were

¹⁸⁶Ross, Kristin. *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of the French Culture*. MIT Press, 1996.p150

¹⁸⁷ Nobreg-Schluz, Christian. *Existence, Space & Architecture*. Studio Vista, 1971.

bookshops with racks of magazines printed without capital letters or the Bourgeois disturbance of full stops; there were shops selling all the records you could desire, there were parties where girls and boys didn't know took you upstairs and fucked you; there were all the drugs you could use. You see, there were all drugs you could use. You see I didn't ask much of life; this was the extent of my longing. But at least my goals were clear and I knew what I wanted. I was twenty. I was ready for anything"¹⁸⁸

The passage above details Karim's conception of the metropolitan city of London as a space. He tends to create an abstract image for space where he would live. For Lefebvre, space is produced according to three cognitive stages: Perceived, conceived and lived space. Firstly the conceived space constitutes the abstract image of space in the mind of the person concerned.

This can be seen through Karim's fantasies about London and the image he tends to construct about it, depending on stories he had heard. This perceived space goes hand in hand with the representation of space which is the image that defines space. Representations of space come into being at the level of discourse, therefore, holding a "verbalized forms such as description or definitions"¹⁸⁹ Thus Karim's perception of London as a space seen to be very positive. He thinks that the urban, space would provide him with a suitable place to inhabit as long as it contains what he dreams of. Another factor that makes Karim believe that London is a suitable space for him is his search for "normality" and "non-visibility" as he says : "there were thousands of Black people everywhere; so I wouldn't feel exposed"¹⁹⁰ The image that creates about London as a big city is everything that suburbs are not .

¹⁸⁸ Kureishi, Hanif. *The Buddha of Suburbia*. London: Penguin Books, 1991.

¹⁸⁹ Kanishka Goonewardena, Stefan Kipee, Richard Milgrom, Christian Schmid. *Space, Difference, Everyday Life: Reading Henri Lefebvre*. 2008,p37

¹⁹⁰ Ibid,p121

Nevertheless Karim's fascination by the city was interrupted by the meaninglessness he encountered after spending few days in New York. He feels defeated because he could not accommodate with the modernity of this big city and its accompanying values. This actually takes us to Richard Sennett's apprehension of the city space as negative and meaningless. In his book *Flesh and Stone The body and the city in Western Civilization* 1994, he argues that the modern city has "falsified" the emphasis on the fact that people who dwell big cities tend to share common interests. He claims that this is the ultimate result of the frustrating consequence of the 19th century's priority of the private comfort and the decision "to resist the demands of crowds and privilege the claims of individuals"¹⁹¹. This, According to him, results in the loss of confidence in the public space and community experience. In fact, this is exactly what happened to Karim. After holding frequent dreams about leaving his suburban space, he was finally convinced that it is the only one that fits him.

III.5. Projecting Lefebvrian "everydayness" on the novels

In an attempt to study the effects of this notion on the process of space production, a closer look at Lefebvre's own conception of "The Everyday life" needs to be tackled. Therein, the production of space is not only bound up with materiality but also, it is about producing a space that is influenced by certain parameters, namely culture and place. Spaces as Henry Lefebvre conceives them are the ones found on streets, houses, workplaces or even forests. He has approached this problematic in correspondence with the term "everyday life". For Lefebvre, the notion of everydayness or the everyday has been described as follows:

"the study of everyday life affords a meeting place for specialized sciences and something more besides; it exposes the possibilities of conflict between the rational and irrational in our society and in or time, thus permitting the formulation of concrete problems of production of sp in its widest sense how the

¹⁹¹ Sennet. *The Uses of Disorder*. New York: Knopf, 1979.p369

social existence of human beings is produced, its transition from want to affluence and from appreciation to depreciation.”¹⁹²

The term “everyday life” is the English translation of the French notion “la vie quotidienne”. However, Lefebvre is not completely keen on the way it is translated to English. He suggests that the term “quotidienne” signifies the iterative nature of the daily life of human beings¹⁹³. Lefebvre makes a distinction between the different terms he uses regarding the concept of “everyday”, he uses the word everyday (quotidien) to refer to the entry of the daily life (la vie quotidienne) to modernity. However, the notion of “everydayness” (quotidienneté) signifies the homogenous, the repetitive, and the fragmentary¹⁹⁴.

Lefebvre argues that the everyday life no matter how typical and dull it may seem is not fully understood. Lefebvre agrees with Hegel’s views regarding the familiar (das Bekannte) and the notable importance he directs to the dictum. Hegel believes that not every familiar is well known; everyday life may be familiar to us but it cannot be understood. Hereon, Lefebvre stresses on the fact that analyzing the everyday may bring out the extraordinary in the ordinary¹⁹⁵.

Being influenced by Marxism¹⁹⁶, Lefebvre tends to critique “the everyday life” as being based on alienation or absurdity of life as a major characteristic of modernity.¹⁹⁷ This

¹⁹² Lefebvre, Henry. *Everyday Life in Modern World*. London: Allen Lane, 1971.

¹⁹³ Toward a leftist cultural politics, p78.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, p87.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid

¹⁹⁶ It is essential to draw a parallel line between Lefebvrian conception of space and Marxism. This latter had witnessed a turning point in its history after Marx’s 1844 Manuscripts had been first published in German in 1927, when Lefebvre’s colleague Norbert Guterman translated few fragments in *La revue Marxiste* two years later. This actually was the first time they had been translated to any language. Lefebvre being influenced by the writings of Hegel tried to draw a convergence spot between Marxism and Hegelian philosophy, in an attempt to rescue Marxism from being a reductionist reading that had reduced it to a single science: political economy. What Lefebvre sought to achieve is to derive philosophy or morality in Marx beyond its limitation to economy and politics. In his book *The Sociology of Marx* 1966, Lefebvre suggested that “Marx is not a sociologist, but there is sociology in Marxism”. He claims that Marx should be looked at from different angles and as having plural sense. Lefebvre’s senior influence by Marxism is prominent in all his works that he became widely known as a Marxist philosopher.

idea was expressed in his book where he collaborated with Norbert Guterman. Published in 1947 “*Critique of Everyday Life*” was considered as an extension to Marx’s analysis in which Lefebvre sought to present new forms of alienation as well as a platform through which he tends to reveal the exploitative nature of capitalism and its crucial role in organizing social relations. Moreover, Lefebvre along with Guterman go further to blame capitalism for the way the modern life has lost its significance and meaning that is being recaptured through purchasing glamorous commodities. By hinting at the consumerist side of capitalism, Lefebvre, again, sheds light on how this latter has turned people’s lives into a cycle of dis-recognition that he terms mystification of consciousness¹⁹⁸

The concept of “everydayness” examines how people produce their spaces during their everyday engagement with life. In this respect, Lefebvre suggests that:

“everyday life , in a sense residual, defined by what is left over after all distinction superior , specialized, structured activities have been singled out by analysis, must be defined as a totality... Everyday life is profoundly related to all activities and encompasses them with all their differences and their conflicts; it is their meeting place, their bond, their common ground. And it is in everyday life that the sum total of relations which make the human –an every human being- a whole takes its shape and its form. In it are expressed and fulfilled those relations which bring into play the totality of the real, albeit in a certain manner which is always partial and incomplete. Friendship; comradeship, love, the need to communicate, play ect”¹⁹⁹

For Lefebvre, taking a day in a life of individual is similar to choosing any day from the calendar, for example the book of *Ulysses* of James Joyce where he chose the date of 16 June

¹⁹⁷ Lefebvre extends his criticism to the effects of modernity on the everyday life of individuals, building his analysis on Marxist basis. According to Lefebvre, everydayness was an extension to Marx’s theory of alienation that looks into the consequences of the rise of modernism as ultimate result of capitalism. Lefebvre’s critical views of modernity are built upon the fact that capitalist growth sucked the meaning of everyday life. He argues that Alienation, the feeling of exhaustion, stress and poverty are the consequences of capitalism that had invaded people’s lives outside the space of work. Their lifestyles became highly relying on consumption that is marked by purchase of commodities that furthered the cycle of alienation.

¹⁹⁸ Lefebvre, Henry. *Everyday Life in Modern World*. London: Allen Lane, 1971.p110

¹⁹⁹ Ibid

1904. Lefebvre states that Joyce was the writer who had really established the idea of daily life in literature” The book of *Ulysses* details the story of an ordinary man during twenty four hours. Thus, everyday life is everything that happens once work is over: “everyday life is sustenance, clothing, furnishing, homes, lodgings, neighborhoods, and environment”²⁰⁰ is the contact spot and even the conflict zone that gathers desire and need, the serious and the frivolous, nature and culture, the public and the private.²⁰¹

In an attempt to apply the notion of everydayness and look into its effects on space production among the characters of novels dealt with, a projection of this concept need to be conducted on the way they engage in their daily lives as it is vividly pictured by Kureishi and Ali.

What Hanif Kureishi and Monica Ali tried to highlight in their novels is presenting the status of the first and second generation immigrants in the central city of London and how the movement from their peripheral spaces affected the on going process of their daily lives and the process of space production in a place that is different from theirs.

Hanif Kureishi’s novel is a bildungsroman story that follows, its protagonist Karim’s moral and psychological growth as a young artist that is making his way towards fame and success. Karim, the protagonist, goes through a range of “conflicts and dilemmas, social, sexual and political”²⁰² Kureishi represents skillfully the multifaceted identity of Karim through hinting at the way he engages in his daily life. When talking about the ongoing process of Karim’s daily life, it is important to talk about it within a British context through which Kureishi attempts to depict Britain as post-imperial setting.

²⁰⁰ 'Les mythes dans la vie quotidienne', *Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie* xxxm,1962, pp. 67-74, p. 67; *Key Writings*, edited by Stuart Elden, Elizabeth Lebas and Eleonore Kofman, London: Continuum, 2003.

²⁰¹ *ibid*

²⁰² Moore-Gilbert, Bart. *Hanif Kureishi*. Manchester University Press, 2001.p125

Kureishi draws a paramount attention to serious problematic in the social sphere atop of which racism and issues of belonging. It is no surprise to claim that these two concerns occupy a large part in the daily life of the characters, especially the one of Karim. In fact, racism, being an obstacle that hinders the characters process of assimilation in the British society also consists a hitch that delays the process of space production. Kureishi tends to vividly plot the events of the novel by giving them a true –to life dimensions. Even though the novel's events take place in the 1970's before the Thatcher's era and it was written in 1980's and published by the 1990's, the time during which Thatcher was a prime minister, Thatcherism effects were still there. By reading the novel and figuring out its political context, the traces of conservative neoliberal agenda and the problems that sprung out as a result became prominent. In this respect, Moore Gilberts argues that: "Kureishi's films endorse the politics of social movements which had their origins in the 1960's 'counter culture', especially feminism, gay rights activism and new forms of mobilization around the issue of race"²⁰³.

Likewise, Kureishi chooses his protagonist to foreshadow the struggle of the South Asian diaspora (generally) in maintaining themselves in the central city of London. In addition, he follows the process of space production through their daily life experiences and how do they perceive it. As mentioned earlier, space can be ranked as having three parts mental, physical and social one.

Conclusion

²⁰³ Ibid

All in all, contemporary British literature has directed a notable importance to place and space due to the huge influence of space on South Asian Diasporic populations who have achieved shifts from their peripheral homelands to the central city of London. Therefore, it is no surprise to claim that the cultural initiatives of post-colonial London witnessed a remarkable change in the city's architecture of power. This change has paved the way to the emergence of multiplicity of spaces that helped to bring to the center the ethnic minorities who have long occupied the margins. After analyzing the available spaces in the novels dealt with, it becomes prominent that their experiences are closely tied to the spaces they have produced. Indeed, as it is illustrated by Lefebvre, space is mainly a social construct. He stresses upon the importance of the historical and spatial experiences and how it has changed over time. Lefebvrian tripartite theory of space production is composed of: spatial practice, representations of space and representational spaces. Spatial practice represents the cohesive places and models of human activities within the social sphere. It is perceived in the everyday activities such as playing and working. Representations of space are concerned with the conception of space by geographers and engineers. Representational spaces are the ones imagine and under constant attempts of appropriation. The importance of this triad lays in the fact that it helps to clarify the social models that dictate the production of abstract spaces. De facto, the characters represented in Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* and Monica Ali's *Brick lane* tend to move from one space to another in accordance with their lived experiences.

In Hanif Kureishi's novel, there are some characters which could successfully produce a space to belong to. Karim, for instance, is pictured in the novel as ceaselessly seeking to escape from the suburban space in which he grew up towards more open and diverse one where he could free himself from the constraints of his cultural background and exotic looks. However, he eventually fails to produce this space that he had long imagined. He is portrayed

in the end on the novel as being satisfied with his suburban space where he could finally find relief.

Nevertheless, in Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* the extent to which spaces were successfully produced depended heavily on the experiences of the characters. A suitable illustration here, is juxtaposing Nazneen to her husband Chanu. While Nazneen could successfully produce a space of her own where she could maintain herself, her husband Chanu failed to produce his own space in the metropolitan city of London. Even though, Chanu had more possibility to produce a space to fit in, he eventually chose to get back to his homeland and dwell his original peripheral homeland that is a space of self-recognition

General conclusion

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Over the last decades, the studies of space sprung out to be one of the most prominent issues that attract academic scholars. Its significance is manifested in the impact of space and place on individuals. Recently, movement and mobility became found everywhere; notably, migration which is one of the major phenomena of spatiality. Migrants who move from one place to another hold with them their past experiences, memories and cultures. Narratives, whenever produced, discuss their experiences of displacement, location and relocation.

Many populations who achieve shifts from peripheral spaces to central ones , especially where there exist a kind of historical ties between them results in a relationship that is characterized by senses of superiority and inferiority. In fact , the historical legacies of colonialism have given birth to new cultural spaces in the English metropolis, corresponding to Stuart Hall's concept of "new ethnicities". The fact that London became the muse of different cultures has resulted in a significant interest in the geographical locations such as towns and suburbs and their ultimate effects on diasporic populations dwelling the "centre". South Asian diaspora who live in Britain consist one of these populations. Black British literature, as one of the intellectual diasporic productions, embodies a textual space in which experiences of displacement, alienation and marginality are articulated.

Black British writers tell stories of multiple destinations, various stops and sometimes potential returns. Not only do they articulate their sentiments as being exiled from their homelands, but they also portray their experiences after they established themselves in the host lands. Among the problems they face is how to locate themselves in a space that is characterized by cultural aspects different from theirs. Furthermore, what seemed problematic is the process of dislocation from their original cultures and whether it is done willingly or under pressure from the host culture. In addition, being diasporic subjects that once belonged

to peripheral spaces has affected the process through which they produce their own spaces in the English metropolis .

Indeed, the works dealt with in this project: Hanif Kureish's *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1991) and Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* (2004) are widely classified by critics to be among the prominent works of the Black British Literature. They both consist textual spaces that seek to shed light on the quandary of the less potent non-western cultures that are being relegated to marginal spaces. Moreover, with their extensive engagement in enunciating the problematic issues concerned with cultural (dis and re) location with respect to space and spatiality, they tend to depict characters that are culturally troubled due to their mixed heritage and dual cultural backgrounds.

In addition, both works, regarding their titles which are highly connotative in terms of spatiality, has led to the tentative application of Lefebvrian theory of production of space whose focal argument is: space being fundamentally as social product. Likewise, Lefebvrian tripartite has been of a notable importance in highlighting the various spaces existing in the novels. By taking London as a common setting to both novels, Kureishi and Ali reinforce John Clement ball's conception of London as being a social space that is characterized by particular racial and cultural experiences, showing it as both: a site that is limiting and enabling.

Moreover, by returning to the problematic questions that fueled this research, it becomes closely eminent that the methodological plan followed in this study and that adopted an analytical approach; which depended on Lefebvrian theory of production of space as well as Bhabha's third space was significant in order to highlight the process through which characters could produce their own spaces. These spaces are where they can surpass the limitations imposed by their cultural backgrounds. Also, after analyzing the status of the

immigrants coming from British ex-colonies through the portrayal of major characters in the novels dealt with, it became confirmed that these characters found it ultimately problematic to successfully relocate themselves in England.

The stereotypical views held by the British formed an invisible delphinium that hindered the process of cultural location. In fact, through the course of the events of these two novels, only few characters could establish themselves in Britain and these characters usually belonged to the second generation immigrants. In Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*, the protagonist Karim could culturally relocate himself in England because he did not let the racial prejudices control his life, but rather, he took advantage of his exotic looks to co-exist peacefully in the English metropolis. However, Haroon, his father's friend, could not surmount the obstacles imposed on him by his Indian-like appearance and had recurring dreams of return because he was unable to adapt to the western culture's principles as long as they radically contradict with his.

Notwithstanding, in Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*, many characters could relocate themselves; either through dislocation from one's original culture or through accepting the challenges decreed on them by the British society and culture. Female characters such as Nazneen, Razia, Shahana and Bibi managed in a velvet glove to surmount their cultural differences and assimilate in the British society with its accompanying culture. Nazneen, for instance, after being long isolated from the western culture and locked inside her flat in Brick lane, she finally could get out of her cocoon to embrace her difference and approach the English culture with steady and careful steps. She refuses to get back "home" with her husband and prefers staying in England. However, for Razia the case was different. She felt liberated after the death of her husband. Razia is the epitome of the characters who totally dislocated themselves from their original cultures and adopted the English one as a sort of self-liberation. For Shahana and Bibi, the process of cultural relocation was natural. Since

they were not acquainted with their original culture and instead they were imbibed with the principles of the English one. They never acknowledged their belonging to Bangladesh and they even despised its culture. Nonetheless, Chanu, Nazneen's husband, could not relocate himself in Britain and could not identify with the English culture despite his continuous attempts. He thinks that he is rejected by this culture due to his constant feelings of inferiority that are stimulated by the superiority of the English.

Moreover, after analyzing the effects of culture on the process of cultural location, what was left is to look into the production of space and the extent to which it was manageable for the characters. To this end, many spaces have been thoroughly investigated within the plenum of this research. Suburban and urban (city) spaces were pervasive in the works dealt with. By relying on Lefebvrian theory of production of space, we found out that some characters such as Karim of *The Buddha of Suburbia* and Chanu of Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* could adapt to suburban spaces more than the urban ones. However, other characters such as Charlie, Razia, Nazneen, Shahana and Bibi could successfully produce their own spaces in the city. Over and above, a closer examination at Lefebvrian notion of everydayness and everyday life has been immensely helpful in the analysis of the different spaces existing in the novels. This notion implies a study of how individuals engage in their daily lives that is dominated by capitalist mode of life and having a consumerist nature.

In addition, It is worth to mention that the accomplishment of this research was not as manageable as it was first expected. Aside from the difficulty in purchasing the documents needed to conduct this research, their availability in a compatible way to the title of this project was humbly present. Furthermore, the emerging studies of space and place and Geocriticism in fiction are among the nascent fields of academic researches in humanities. The fact of being novice, meant that there were not enough resources in this subject. Indeed, the study of space in fiction did not attain the deserved attention from scholars. Besides, what

was considered a difficulty too was dealing with the emergence of other problematic questions that sprung out amid the process of this research. These problematic issues, if to be included in this project, they could take it to another direction as far as the topic of this research is concerned. Among the questions are: how does the sexual orientations of certain characters affect space production? And is the characters' confused sexual identity intermingled with their cultural confusion? Also another question that seemed crucial is can we speak about a queer space in this case. Actually, answering them could be an interesting topic for another research. Finally, the fact that this work combines issues of culture and Lefebvrian theory of production of space makes it an essential contribution to the academic studies that deal with space and spatiality.

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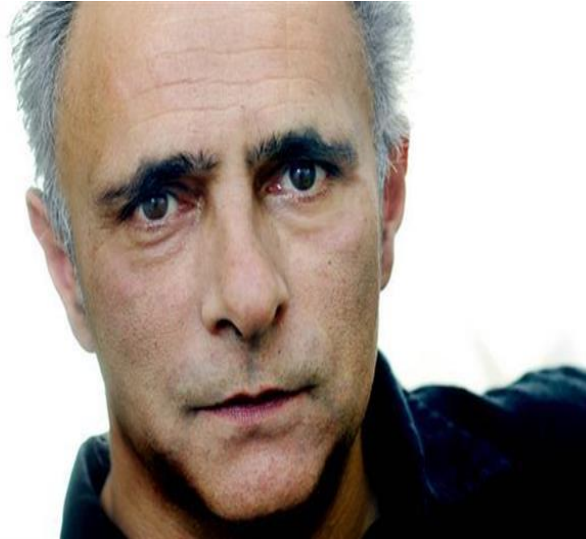
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Appendix 1: Hanif Kureishi born on 5 December 1954

Hanif Kureishi, one of the prominent writers in contemporary Black British literature. He foregrounded the public scene thanks to his boldness in discussing issues related to race, stereotypes and sexual identity. In one of his interviews, he said that “I’ve never had any desire to be good”. “I don’t like goodness particularly. I like passion.” Kureishi has always believed that the responsibility of the writer is to be confrontational and adversarial. He claims that “Artists should be terrorists” he once remarked in an interview, “not masseurs” “And nobody could say he has not been true to his word.” Indeed, Kureishi was such a multitalented artist. He wrote many plays, and directed some. Most of his novels have been cinematically adopted. In a career that lasted more than 20 years during which he has written plays, novels, essays, screenplays and polemics, Kureishi has done more than his fair share of bothering the public taste. He disgraced many people who belong to the Muslim community in 1985 with his first screenplay, *My Beautiful Laundrette* (1987), which portrayed a queer affair between a Pakistani and a white man.

Prior to that film, his next one that was also a novel he named : *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* (1987) consisted pettishly an acidic criticism to Thatcherite Britain, which he described as “an authoritarian rat-hole” – This has caused him to get the opprobrium and disgrace of

Right-wing critics. As described by the historian Norman Stone , both movies fall due a prize for their 'general disgustingness'. Moreover the series of shocking facts about Kureishi are not yet over. Most of his works earned him anger disapproval from his family members. As many critics have highlighted , most of his works are autobiographical. Kureishi is adept at capturing middle-aged masculinity and its discontents, namely, men under the pressures of their own *angst* and insecure sense of self. *Intimacy* appeared to some controversy in 1998 due to its apparently autobiographical basis, depicting a screenwriter's flow of thoughts as he prepares to leave his wife and kids, convinced that it's really 'an infidelity' to 'old notions of oneself'. *Gabriel's Gift* (2001) is a more positive thought of broken family relationships in 'this new international city called London'. The protagonist is a young boy who prompts his musician father to regain self-respect and in doing so realizes his own way to be creative in the film-making world.



Appendix 2: Monica Ali born on 20 October 1967

She first appeared, Monica Ali has been hailed by critics as that rare thing, “a writer who seemed to have found, right at the beginning of her career and with absolute confidence, her own voice.” (Natasha Walter, *The Guardian*, 2006). After a meteoric rise to prominence with *Brick Lane* (2003), Ali has come out as a chronicler of contemporary multicultural Britain able to channel a broad sweep of modern life into well-crafted traditional novelistic forms. Her subsequent books have been more varied in their critical success, and the excitement that surrounded her has become more subdued. But her forays into diverse settings beyond her original terrain have continued to reach a wide audience. The story of her overnight success is well-known. Even before Ali had completed her famous debut she was signed her up after her publisher had seen only five chapters of her first draft. *Granta* reiterated this faith in her skill as a novelist, when they based their decision to name her as one of their 'Best of Young British Novelists' in 2003 on just the manuscript. Since this early popular and critical success, Ali has shown an admirable willingness to wrong-foot and surprise her readers, with novels that have often ranged far beyond the limiting canvas of the 'British multicultural novel' template that she helped to establish.²⁰⁴



²⁰⁴ <https://literature.britishcouncil.org/writer/monica-ali>

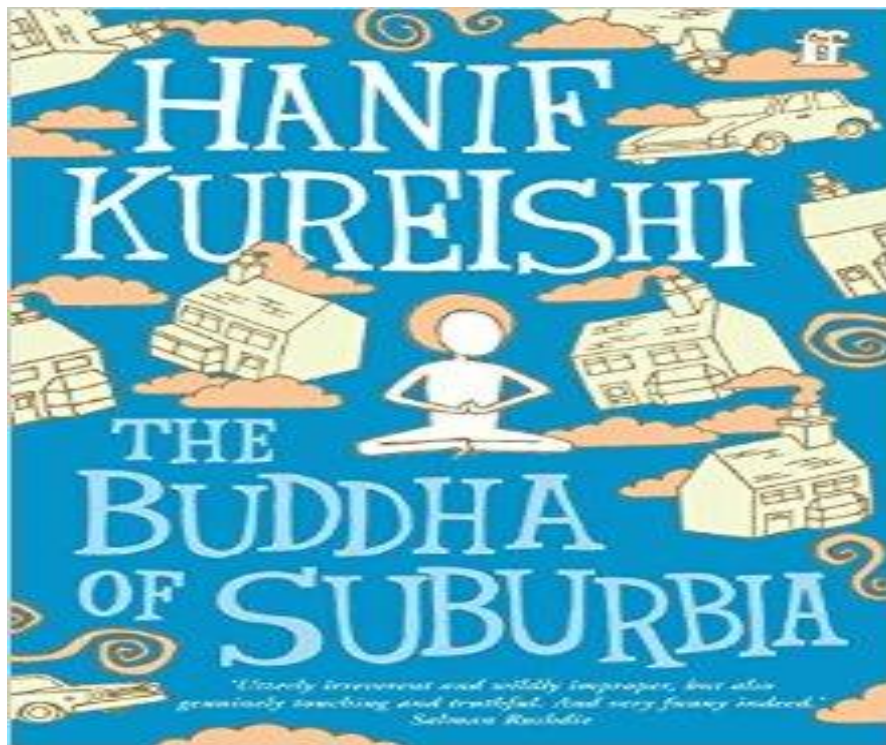
Appendix 3: Henry Lefebvre (16 June 1901 – 29 June 1991)

Henry Lefebvre was born in Hagetmau, Landes, France. He studied philosophy at the University of Paris (the Sorbonne), and graduated in 1920. By the year 1924 he was working with Paul Nizan, Norbert Guterman, Georges Friedmann, Georges Politzer and Pierre Morhange in the *Philosophies* group seeking a "philosophical revolution".

He was a Marxist who introduced into France a whole body of humanist Marxism. But he was a Marxist who seemed to reinvent himself, conceive a new sound, probe a new idea, reach new note, almost every decade. Each reinvention built on an already accomplished body of work, yet took it further, propelled it onward. Frequently, these restless formulations recreated the old world in a new way; other times they somehow anticipated what was about to unfold in reality. He authored more than sixty books, since translated into thirty different languages, and made brilliant analyses on dialectics and alienation, everyday life and urbanism. The “retired” professor never let up in the 1970s and 1980s, never rested on his emeritus laurels.

Lefebvre dedicated a great deal of his philosophical writings to understanding the importance of (the production of) space in what he called the reproduction of social relations of production. This idea is the central argument in the book *The Survival of Capitalism*, written as a sort of prelude to *La Production de l'espace* (1974) (*The Production of Space*). These works have deeply influenced current urban theory, mainly within human geography, as seen in the current work of authors such as [David Harvey](#), [Dolores Hayden](#), and [Edward Soja](#), and in the contemporary discussions around the notion of [Spatial justice](#). Lefebvre is widely recognized as a Marxist thinker who was responsible for widening considerably the scope of Marxist theory, embracing everyday life and the contemporary meanings and implications of the ever expanding reach of the urban in the western world throughout the 20th century. The generalization of industry, and its relation to cities (which is treated in *La*

Pensée marxiste et la ville), *The Right to the City* and *The Urban Revolution* were all themes of Lefebvre's writings in the late 1960s, which was concerned, among other aspects, with the deep transformation of "the city" into "the urban" which culminated in its omni-presence (the "complete urbanization of society").²⁰⁵



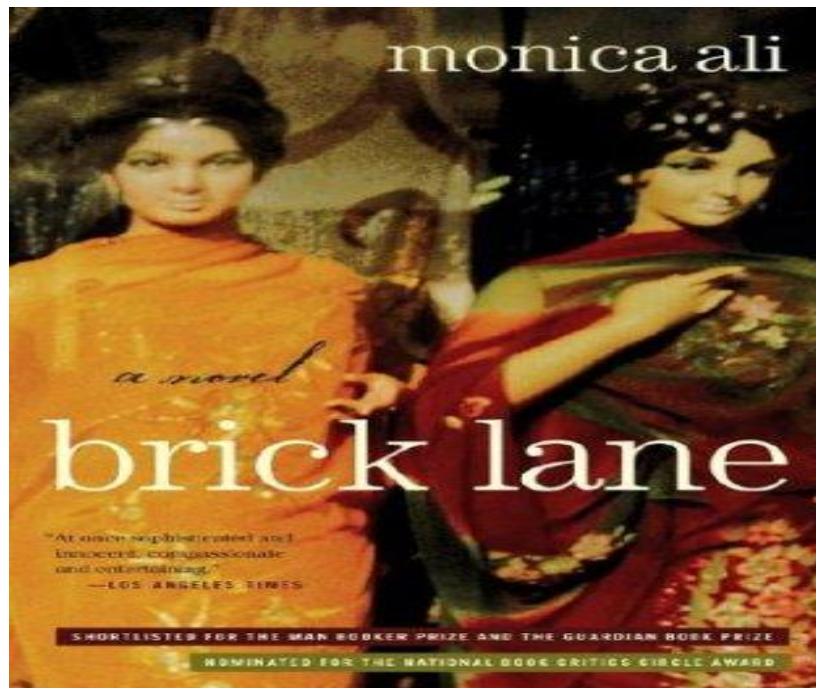
Appendix 4: The Buddha of Suburbia 1991

The Buddha of Suburbia, Hanif Kureishi's comic masterpiece that was widely acclaimed by critics, is considered to be partially autobiographical. Its events resemble to a great extent the real events of Kureishi's own life. Highly acclaimed then and now as a comic novel, *The Buddha of Suburbia* is practically set in 1970s London, taking the suburbs as a pervasive setting to most of its events. It follows the life of an aspiring young actor Karim and his journey towards recognition and success.

²⁰⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henri_Lefebvre. Retrived on:15-02-2016

As he commences his career in a production of *The Jungle Book* and has to take part in a swinging orgy held by radical theatre director Dyke. While the historical context of the novel is noteworthy to the plotline events, Kureishi tends, through this novel, to aptly highlight the common and timeless issues of identity, racism and alienation that are experienced by first and second generation immigrants from non-western backgrounds. Furthermore, Kureishi's novel contributes in raising awareness of the problems that the ethnic minorities face among which cultural dislocation, racism and the fact of being constantly subjects to English radical stereotypes. The novel is also considered to be a bildungsroman; it follows the life of a young kid named Karim and his journey towards self-discovery, identity tolerance as well as his life as a South Asian diasporants. Like his ethnic identification, Karim's sexuality is complicated.. Karim's early sexual experiences range from various encounters with Charlie to another, quasi-regular relationship with Jamila, his childhood friend. But their sex seems mechanical, to be more about satisfying carnal impulses and, perhaps, simple friendship than anything romantic, never mind emotional. Furthermore, Karim's relationships are always compounded with an innate selfishness and reliance on the material, or, at least, a dismissal of ideology. He is solipsistic, apolitical and is primarily interested in succeeding but he is often plagued with a lack of motivation. Still, at the novel's end, when there is promise of success on the horizon, Karim treats his family to dinner and says "I began to enjoy my own generosity. . . I felt the pleasure of pleasing others" (283). Granted, this pleasure is fueled by materialism and money, but Karim transforms (or begins his transmogrification) from a totally self-involved space to a place of awareness and caring for others. All in all, Karim, embodies Hanif Kureishi himself; all the descriptions about his physical appearance as well as his life resemble to a great extent the life of Kureishi himself. It pushed many readers, especially who were close to Kureishi, to believe that this novel is largely autobiographical.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁶ For more information visit : <http://www.postcolonialweb.org/uk/kureishi/moloney1.html>



Appendix 5: Monica Ali's Brick Lane 2004

Brick Lane is the story of Nazneen, a young Bangladeshi woman given into an arranged marriage to Chanu Ahmed, a man almost twice her age. Chanu takes her to London, where he has lived and worked for almost two decades. Nazneen not only has to learn to live with Chanu, but she has to survive in a whole new culture as well.

In the small Bangladeshi estate community in London, Nazneen falls in love with ice-skating, which she learns about from television. Nazneen meets other Bangladeshi people who grow through their own struggles. Some of them struggle against the traditions they left behind, while others struggle against the new traditions that their English-born children are exposed to. Nazneen and Chanu become well-acquainted with; Mrs. Islam, a wealthy widow who Chanu describes as "a respectable-type;" Dr. Azad, a successful professional with a family he is ashamed of; and Razia Iqbal, a woman who becomes Nazneen's best friend despite Chanu's admonishments that she is not a respectable-type of woman. Indeed, the novel

is considered to be a textual space created by Ali in order to shed light on a community that was not represented in Black British literature before. She tried to give voice to the voiceless through creating a platform for these minorities to spell out their concerns about being an ethnic minority that dwells London (the former imperialist center). Despite the fact that themes of cultural dislocation and identity struggle are pervasive, this novel is believed to have a variety of themes that touch almost every aspect of the life in the metropolitan city.

